

Exploring the role of the church in economic development: A  
literature review.

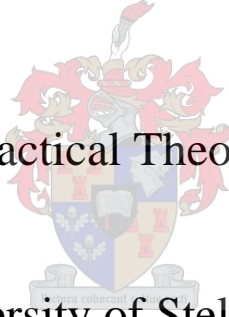
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## **DECLARATION**

I, **Thomas James Solomons**, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

## ABSTRACT

The dissertation sets out to explore the existing scholarly literature on the role of the church in economic development. The research report method will be in the form of a literature review and therefore will be exploratory in nature in the hope to inform the researcher of the views of scholars on the role of the church in economic development as well as possibly preparing the way for further research into investigating this role.

Chapter 1 presents the research methodology that will be employed as well as the objectives that the research hopes to achieve, include:

- To investigate what Biblical scholars understand about the role of the church with regard to economic development by reviewing the existing body of knowledge on the role of the church and economic development;
- To discover what the most authoritative views and accepted definitions are on the concepts under study;
- To make possible recommendations to the church based on the findings of current and previous literature.

In Chapter 2 a literature study explores the views of scholars on the meaning of “the church” in order to investigate or establish what is understood by the concept ‘the church’. This chapter will further explore what is meant by the mandate of the church, the missional and diaconal role of the church, the church as visible sign of God’s saving work and the church and liberation role of the church. This study sets itself the task to investigate literature on the history and the context of the church as a constituent body in the world and then attempt to find a form of consensus on the role of the church.

Chapter 3 will have a particular focus on exploring the views of scholars on the meaning of development and economic development. This literature review will take a multi disciplinary approach therefore this chapter will have a particular focus on the view of scholars in economic development studies.

Chapter 4 examines the views of scholars on the role of the church in economic development. This chapter seeks to investigate if the church has a role to play in economic development as

one of the role players in the fight against poverty, unemployment and the establishment of effective development programs.

Finally, the overall summary, conclusion and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5.

## OPSOMMING

Die studie het ten doel om verkennend na literatuur te kyk wat handel oor die rol van die Kerk in Ekonomiese Ontwikkeling deur na te speur oor wat deur kenners geskryf is oor die rol van die Kerk in Ekonomiese Ontwikkeling. Die navorsingsmetode wat vir Hierdie studie gebruik sal word neem die vorm aan van 'n literatuuroorsig en sal dus daarom verkennend van aard wees in die hoop dat dit die navorser sal inlig oor wat kenners skryf oor die rol van die Kerk in Ekonomiese Ontwikkeling sowel as om die weg te baan vir die moontlikheid om verder navorsing te doen oor die rol van die Kerk in Ekonomiese Ontwikkeling.

Hoofstuk een spel aan ons uit die navorsingsmetode wat vir hierdie navorsingstudie gebruik sal word sowel as wat die beoogde doelwitte is wat die navorser hoop om te bereik na aanleiding van die kwessies soos:

- Om na te vors wat Bybelkenners verstaan van die Kerk met betrekking tot ekonomiese ontwikkeling, deur na die beskikbare bronne te kyk wat handel oor die rol van die kerk in ekonomiese ontwikkeling;
- Om vas te stel wat die mees gesaghebbendste sienings en aanvaarde definisies is oor die konsepte onder bespreking in die studie;
- Om moontlike aanbevelings vir die kerk te maak gebaseer op die bevindinge voortspruitend uit die navorsing van die huidige en vorige literatuur.

In Hoofstuk 2 word 'n literatuur studie gedoen wat verkennend kyk na standpunte van kundiges rondom die betekenis van “kerk” ten einde te ondersoek en of vas te stel wat word verstaan deur die kosep kerk, die mandaat van die kerk, die missionale en diakonale taak van die kerk, die kerk as sigbare teken van God se reddende werk en die kerk en bevryding ten einde in staat te wees om 'n moontlike verstaan daar te stel oor die rol van die kerk.

Hierdie literatuuroorsigstudie volg 'n multi disziplinêre benadering ten einde die navorser in te lig oor ekonomiese ontwikkeling. Hoofstuk 3 het 'n spesifieke fokus om verkennend te kyk na wat kundiges verstaan ontwikkeling en ekonomiese ontwikkeling te wees.

Hoofstuk 4 ondersoek die standpunte en sienings van kenners oor die rol van die kerk in ekonomiese ontwikkeling. Hierdie hoofstuk wys onder meer uit dat die kerk tog op 'n manier

betrokke is in ekonomiese ontwikkeling as rolspeler in die stryd teen armoede, werkloosheid en die daarstel van effektiewe ontwikkelingsprogramme.

Die algehele opsomming, slot en aanbevelings word in Hoostuk 5 bespreek.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my late mother and father, Ena and Elic Solomons, who has been a major source to my Christian life. I furthermore dedicate this work to my wife Pat Solomons and my three daughters, Aleshia, Jamey, Stacey and granddaughter Skhai who showed their love and support. I also would like to dedicate this work to my parents in law, my family and my friends.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 Introduction

Research is about asking and answering questions and creating that which does not currently exist so that we expand the boundaries of our current knowledge (Lues and Lategan 2006:2). Central to this research is the intention to explore the literature that investigates, explains and comment on the role of the church with regard to economic development. As the research report is exploratory in nature in reviewing existing knowledge, it hopes to inform the researcher of the views of scholars and to prepare the way for further research into the role of the church with regard to economic development.

This literature review will take a multi disciplinary approach. This means that the literature will be researched to inform the research on economic development as well as researching literature on the role of the church. This study is not an economic study per se but there would be a particular economic developmental interest as this research study will attempt to explore what scholars have discovered in researching the role of the church with regard to economic development.

The literature review will attempt to give a concise reference to the main theoretical schools of thought on the role of the church in economic development.

## 1.2 Key Concepts

As human beings we live, think and understand language and it is concepts that represent a language as viewed by De Vos (2007:424). De Vos (2007:424) mentions further that concepts is a particular type of word that plays a role in formal processes of knowledge gathering, formation and transfer. In this research key concepts will stand out as it becomes clear according to De Vos( 2007:429), that a conceptual analysis must move beyond a mere dictionary definition.

This research will explore literature that deals with the meaning of the role of the church, development and economic development. Some of the exploration of the themes as mentioned is:

### 1.2.1 The Church

From the search of literature it is clear that research has been done on the meaning and role of the church in order to get some consensus as to what is understood by “the church”. The intention of reviewing literature on the role of the church is to get insight of the views of scholars on the role of the church in order to establish if included in the role of the church is economic development.

Much is implied by scholars in terms of their understanding of the role of the church with regard to economic development, but it seems as if there is not enough guidelines and literature that informs the researcher as to what is understood by the role of the church in economic development. In light of this it is the opinion of the researcher that in exploring the literature and the views of scholars internationally and locally, recommendations for further research can be proposed. A few scholars’ views are mentioned, more scholars will be engaged with as the research progresses, which he encountered that made him come to the conclusion that there is a need for further research as to the understanding of role of the church in economic development as mentioned below.

The word used in the New Testament for “church” is *Ekklesia*, which simply means called out. With this in mind Croft (1987:109,138) stresses the fact that if the church is God’s people who shares in God’s mission, then the church will be good stewards of the whole creation as the people called by God.

Agreement is found in the literature so far reviewed by the researcher that the church is to be involved in development in the world. Church involvement in development according to Sider (1981:19) flows out of God’s command to the church to love our neighbor and in so doing he states that we link ourselves with God’s own work in human society. Christian commitment to action in this world involves struggle in society thus Samuel and Sugden (1990:45) and this would implicate the church to be involved in the daily struggles of her members. Several studies on the role of the church confirm that most theologians like Küng (1973:35, 39); Nel (2005:16) and De Gruchy (1986:209), view as integral to the role of the church is that it should be home for humans, a place where they can join in, give assistance and build on each other. Furthermore it is discovered that the views of Nürnberger (1999:168) and Onwubiko (2001:36, 405), on the role of the church are that it cannot exist for people if it

refuses to speak their language or even relate to their existential situation as the nature of the church is known through her activities and therefore understanding the nature of the church is imperative for the effective mission of the church. Küng (1973:72) draws attention to how Jesus Christ saw the purpose of the church in the fact that Jesus stresses a public ministry, love for sinners, a mission not to gather up the “just” but the *whole* Israel and He rejected withdrawal from the world.

One can deduce from Aarflot’s view (1988:80), that the role of the church can even be linked to economic development when he states that whenever human life is threatened by evil, the church is by necessity a part of the struggle for victory, for a better world and human dignity for humankind as the church always find herself against any form of destruction. Well, one can ask the question if this can honestly be linked to an economic developmental role by the church in the fight against human destruction. Again my curiosity in finding the link has been triggered by Smith (1996:345) when he argues that the fellowship of the first church was not only spiritual, but the fellowship and the struggle of the first church was also affected by new and radical social changes as well as gender and economic gulfs that needed to be bridged.

The call by the church on Christians is that they should serve God in public life, in business, their family affairs and even how they make choices about the use of their time. This in view of Messenger (2004:7) makes the church a missional church in that its message becomes practical and transformative.

Botman (EFSA 1995:250) understands the church to be the people coming together, being called by God to take responsibility for the city, towns, and rural areas and for its entire people. He further argues that it should be in our nature to take responsibility for our citizens, our towns and for our people and therefore the church gets involved in the reconstruction and development programs (EFSA 1995: 252). The church is called to assist in building the fabric of our nation otherwise the RDP will have failed, thus Botman (1995: 254).

Nürnberg (2007:44) draws our attention to his concerns of how the role of the church is viewed when he states: “... most Christian congregations have spiritualized perceptions of what it means to be the church. They never moved beyond preaching, worship and prayer.” The implication would be that the church’s role includes much more than what he mentions. Again this gave reason for the researcher to ask if economic development is part and parcel of



that role.

The Feminist theologian, Letty M. Russell understands the church to be a community of Christ where everyone is welcome and then find yourself committed to the struggle to stand with those on the margin (Russell 1993:43). At the same time Villa-Vicencio view the church as a vision of God's Kingdom on earth, of a society at peace because it is a society in which justice reigns (Villa-Vicencio 1992:30). This deduction is based on the fact that he says with reference to Apartheid in the South African context: 'The call for the church to share theologically in the nation-building process as the old order begins to collapse is of course nothing new.' (Villa-Vicencio 1992: 32). Essentially Villa-Vicencio sees the church playing the role of transcending seemingly impregnable barriers and enabling people to reach towards what some regard as impossible dreams (Villa-Vicencio 1992:31).

The literature review of these and many other scholars will attempt to give clarity and will hope to reveal the conceptual implications of the viewpoints of these scholars in order to give insight to the researcher on the views on the role of the church.

### **1.2.2 Development**

In comparing the views of scholars on development, it seems that there is some agreement that development is about people but as a concept it has different meanings for different people as stated by Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:3); Clark (2002:144) and Gutierrez (1986: 24). It seems that the literature on development wants to suggest that development is a process of social and economic change, transformation and evolution as well as bringing humans to a more advance state. It would therefore be necessary to investigate the views of Eade (1997:3) who suggests that development must lead to capacity building as a long-term investment in people and a commitment to the various processes through which they can better shape the forces that affect their lives. Another scholar, Burkey (2000:48), views development to mean that it involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behavior of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups and society that is not imposed on them.

The term development has become a word that gave expression to the aspirations of the poor if development attacks the root causes of the problems of the poor people according to Gutierrez (1986:24). With the struggle in Latin America, literature shows that Gutierrez

(1986:26) believes that development should lead to liberation, the inescapable moment of radical change which in his view is foreign to the ordinary use of the term *development*. Gutierrez (1986:114) finds the role of the Church as one of assisting with development or in his view, with *liberation*. Insight in how development and then economic development and the role of the church are viewed by scholars from communities like the Latin American communities from the eighties seems to be valuable for the church in Elsie's River, a community in a developing country.

Development according to Elliott (1987:48) is seen as essentially the process of putting together the right bundle of projects to transform society.

The question asked by Simon (1984:78), becomes ever relevant for this research as I explore literature that seems to deal with the church as a role player in economic development, when he asks what kind of world we want to build, not just in the fantasy of idle dreams, but with personal efforts. The church is prompted to respond and act to visible human need by God's love that sets her free to care deeply about others. In so doing the church is clearly pushed into the public arena, however Simon (1984:78,158) reckons notwithstanding the fact that the church has the theological basis and resolution, the church seems to fail to act on the crucial matter of influencing policy making decisions with regard to development.

As this study intends to explore what literature engages with the role of the church with regard to economic development, attention will be given to views like Dr. Cross (EFSA 1994:86) who states that development is not just a material matter so much as it has to do with development of human capacity. He would therefore understand that development initiatives must increase our sense of self-respect, our self-confidence, our dignity, our self-awareness and our self-expression to a point where there is development (Cross 1994:87).

### **1.2.3 Economic Development**

Economic development refers to the improvement of living conditions and the improvement in the quality of life, argues Mohr, Fourie and Associates (2003: 635). It seems that great emphasis is placed on the human aspects of development such as the satisfaction of basic needs and the importance of self-esteem. Mohr, Fourie and Associates (2003: 639-641) state that economic development is a complex phenomenon that involves a variety of social and economic processes and they therefore mention three popular approaches to economic

development.

- Rostow's stages of economic growth (David, Theron and Maphunye 2005:10)

Rostow proposes that every country passes through certain stages, he distinguishes five stages of economic development, during the course of development.

- Dependency Theories

The Marxist economist, Paul Baran developed the dependency theory that states that the underdevelopment of the less developed countries is functionally related to the economic development of the advanced capitalist countries.

- The Basic Needs Approach

Economic growth is not a sufficient condition for economic development but that focuses on concrete, measurable aspects of the quality of life is important.

In reviewing literature on economic development in its common and elementary form one definition states it as a process of change mediated by some form of human intervention according to Carmen (1996:5). Carmen (1996:206) further argues that development starts in people's minds, in their attitudes, value systems and judgments to the point where he believes that people can develop themselves. The intention and purpose of development should be to indicate growth and invoke ownership, argues Carmen (1996:210). It is clear if one take the argument of Carmen (1996:48) and Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:24) seriously that economic development is about putting people first and not putting people last or even ignoring them in the pursuit of economic growth. Economic development seems to be a process whereby countries or societies are transformed.

It is important to take note of the view of Todaro (1989:62) in his observation that economic development is not purely an economic phenomenon but that it encompasses more than the material and financial side of people's lives. Todaro (1989:62) argues that economic development should be perceived as a *multidimensional* process involving the reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social systems. It is exactly with this view of Todaro in mind that the researcher aims to explore literature in order to be informed as to what the role of the church is with regard to economic development.

According to Swanepoel (2006:12), the economic environment is very important in community development as well as the management of resources. The root of the word 'economics' lies in the Greek meaning, the management of a household, the idea of efficiently providing for the wants of a household thus Durlauf and Blume (2008:720). The church is seen as a stakeholder or a role player that can perform certain functions and by so doing have potential to address the issues of a community in need and the development of its youth to a point where the exposure is such that confidence is developed to offer skills and abilities (Swanepoel 2006:17).

When reviewing what scholars broadly understand by the role of the church, it would be interesting to see what economic development theories would offer in order for the church to understand what the role of the church is in economic development.

### **1.3 Motivation**

As a pastor of The Rhenish Church in S.A, serving the Elsies River congregation for the last twenty years, I have a particular interest in what has been documented about the role of the church with regard to economic development. I have need to know what scholars would define as the role of the church is with regard to economic development. Exploring the literature on this theme will bring some insight to me on the views of scholars on the research topic. This insight is needed to assist me in evaluating my ministry and so the role of the church with regard to economic development in Elsies River.

Elsies River was previously declared a coloured township by the pre-apartheid government as a low income housing estate. It is within this community that the Rhenish Church finds herself since 1933 as the agent and role player in developing people based on the view of Kotze (1976:9). Dealing with development in my view means dealing with the very heart of the Gospel and so with the very existence of the church. My experience is that the members of this congregation look to the church to assist them in addressing and eliminating their position of poverty, inequality, and unemployment and skill shortage along with their faith formation. My context constantly challenged me to find out and explore the views of scholars about the church's role as the institution that help her members' meet these basic needs, build self esteem and afford opportunity for development. If economic development according to Mohr, Fourie and associates (2003: 636) is regarded as an improvement in living conditions, than that is what the church is called to do. I want to investigate exploratory what research

has been done internationally and locally on the role of the church with regard to economic development in order to draw conclusions whether what is being done in Elsies River relate to these findings or not. My initial view is that no researcher has linked the role of the church to economic development to a point where there are guidelines and a distinct model for the church to draw from.

An opportunity exists to do an academic exploratory study on the body of knowledge that seems to deal with the role of the church with regard to economic development. The motivation behind this study is to gain insight as to how scholars view the role of the church with regard to economic development. This insight can assist the researcher in further studies to set out a possible framework for the church in terms of the role of the church with regard to economic development.

It would be impossible to include every single article or contribution ever written on this particular topic, but the intention of the researcher is to cover authors and arguments that is representative of the main views.

#### **1.4 The background to the study**

The church in communities that are affected by underdevelopment and economic challenges can only have real meaning if they are conscious of and engaged in development. In view of Bruwer (1994: 10), the church is not like a bandage to cover the wounds of society but a means to heal and develop as its diaconia work becomes visible and audible in real-life situations. The world population is estimated to be over 6 billion people and behind this cold figure are real people doing daily battle to survive as understood by Swanepoel (2006:4). Included in this estimated 6 billion people and more, are the 500 members of the Rhenish Church in Elsies River whom I have to pastor. The question that concerns me more and more is how did the church impact the lives of the members in the past and how will it affect lives in a post-apartheid South Africa where emphasis is placed on restructuring, transformation, people-centered development, empowerment and economic growth and equality. Is it any wonder that South Africa after apartheid introduced a Black Economic Empowerment policy as an integrated and coherent socio-economic process that was intended to directly contribute to the economic transformation of South Africa to the benefit of those who have been deprived by previous government policies? Critical then for the church is to know what views and positions did researches in an international and a South African context come to in terms

of the role of the church in economic development. Can we depend on the views of researchers on the role of the church in economic development, if any, in implementing it to the context in Elsie's River? Do we have a school of knowledge as a guide in being church and transforming the lives of members of this community in terms of the economic challenges?

It is the understanding of the researcher after much reading, that economic development increases the capacity of people to make decisions that affect their lives as viewed by scholars like Rubin and Rubin (1986:20). The general theme that one picks up from Smith (2003:22), and Nürnberger (2007:45) is that religion can influence development in the lives of people by increasing their competence, skills and knowledge so that it enhance their well-being and improve their life chances even in the economic world and that the church should therefore be a haven of economic development for her members as they are exposed to grave dangers, temptations and afflictions in the economic world of our day. The question is, is that really the case? Connected to this question surely is what is understood by the role of the church with regard to economic development? This quest to know has moved me to review a body of knowledge to see how scholars have investigated this research problem.

The community that I serve has long been affected by underdevelopment and economic challenges but the church has been very active in being church to the members. Was it an effective way of being church with regard to responding to the economic development needs as viewed by scholars based on the review of literature?

By doing a well-integrated literature review, this research will hope to offer answers to the quest for clarity and at the same time explore the implications of the views of scholars on the role of the church in economic development.

## **1.5 The Research Question**

What is the role of the church regarding economic development?

Sub questions related to the main research question are:

- What do scholars view as and what are the leading positions on the role of the church and does it include economic development?

- What insights from the literature that was reviewed will enable the researcher to form an opinion and even make some recommendations to the church on the role of the church in economic development

In agreement with Maxwell (1996:49), it is so that the research question are at the heart of the research design as it does have an influence on every part of the study while it attempts to explain what the intent of the study is. It is this research question that will assist the researcher to focus the study and to give guidance on how to conduct the study (Maxwell 1996:51).

## **1.6 The aim of the study**

The role of the Church has been widely researched, but it seems needful to research much more literature on the role of the Church in economic development. This need is based on the presupposition by the researcher that literature on the role of the church in economic development where the link between the two is explicit, is lacking to a point where recommendations can be made to the church in this regard. The notion that the church is there to teach you how to go to heaven assume that the church has no role in the economic development of people and this has been a challenge to members of my community. How do we address this challenge lead me to explore literature and studies that attempt to deal with this perspective. What is needed at this stage are a detailed, holistic account of scholars on the role of the church in economic development that might reveal the complexity, richness, diversity and challenges that the church need to take note of.

In an attempt to address the above research need, the proposed study will focus on literature that deal with development, economic development and the role of the church in economic development in order to gain insight of the reality of what it mean when scholars refer to the role of the church in economic development.

In order to achieve this goal the researcher will endeavor to research the following objectives:

- To investigate what Biblical scholars understand about the role of the church with regard to economic development by reviewing the existing body of knowledge on the role of the church and economic development;

- To discover what the most authoritative views and accepted definitions are on the concepts under study;
- To make recommendations to the church based on the findings of current and previous literature.

## **1.7 The Research Methodology**

This research will be done on the basis of a literature review. It is so that the methods are the means to answering our research questions (Maxwell 1996:74). The research methodology serves as a guide as to how the specific study will be conducted.

The literature review method intends to investigate the information that have been published on this research topic as viewed by Lues and Lategan (2006: 20) and Ridley (2009:16, 33).

## **1.8 The Research Design**

In order to address the research question adequately it is sensible to follow a non-empirical research design with a literature review as the research method option, seeing that according to Ridley (2009:33) the literature itself provides the source of data and therefore is the focus of analysis. This will enable the researcher to, with the view of scholars in the respective fields, review conceptual analyses that will inform the researcher of what has already been researched in this regard and what the views are of researchers on the concepts under investigation. This will also enable the researcher to establish where further research is needed based on possible limitations.

The material and evidence gathered through this research by using this method will surely inform the researcher what conclusions can be drawn based on the research question.

Normally specific techniques are employed, measuring instruments be utilized and specific series of activities be conducted in research but in terms of the literature review method the researcher will be dependent primarily on written material in drawing conclusions as understood by De Vos (2007:118). In light of this research, literature will be reviewed to assist the researcher in getting insight into the views of scholars on the role of the church in economic development.



## 1.9 Literature Review

The proposed study will focus on reviewing literature on the role of the church in economic development. Therefore, in exploring the views of scholars, diverse meanings will be appreciated. One of the primary reasons for this research method is based on the view of Ridley (2009:31) that states that literature search helps to identify key people, key researchers and their published work and texts which are relevant to the research topic. This way of dealing with this research study is quite comprehensive since it includes the views of scholars on development, economics and economic development and the role of the church, and the relationship between these elements at all levels. The importance of this literature review will be valuable for the context of the researcher as the insights that will be gained will inform the researcher on the meaning of ministry in his context.

Literature reviews intend to provide us with an overview of scholarship in a certain discipline as viewed by Mouton (2001: 179). Leedy and Ormrod (2005:64) are of the opinion that a literature review intend to survey and describe theoretical perspectives and previous research findings with the function to “look again” at what others have done in areas that are similar, though not necessarily identical to one’s own area of investigation. The overview of literature that will be researched will have it as an intention to give us an understanding of the view of scholars on the role of the church with regard to economic development. Based on Ridley’s (2009:30) argument, we are lead to believe that a literature research is a means of extending your understanding of key concepts. One can therefore accept that a well-integrated and a comprehensive literature review are necessary to know what the thinking and definitions are with regard to the concepts that this research intent to deal with as concluded from the views of Mouton (2001: 180).

Mouton (2001:91) suggests six possible ways to organize the review of the literature namely:

- chronologically,
- by school of thought, theory, definition
- By theme or construct
- By hypothesis
- By case study
- By method

This literature review will follow the theme or construct way that Mouton mentions as the attempt is to explore literature that deals with the concepts under investigation ( Mouton 2001:93). It would be a logical way of doing the research as the researcher intends to explore researcher's definitions on the role of the church in economic development.

To summarize, Ridley (2009:30) help us to understand that one will be in a better position to make informed choices about the important research related issues through a comprehensive literature review research. Literature related to my topic will be found in books, journals, newspapers, conference presentations and web sites.

My emphasis in this literature review will be on how the ideas of scholars and research findings relate to the role of the church with regard to economic development.

### **1.10 Research Ethics**

It will be the aim of the researcher to conduct this research project in a socially, scientifically and ethically responsible manner. The researcher therefore will as Babbie (2001:527) states it, be accountable to funders and sponsors, obliged to free and open dissemination of research results, maintain objectivity and integrity.

Social research often require of people to reveal personal information about them that might have to be revealed to strangers argues Babbie (2001:521). With regard to a literature review the researcher accepts Moutons view (2001:90) to be careful not to approach the body of knowledge with a pre-set interpretation. This asks of the researcher to always do justice to the author's arguments and reasoning before starting to criticize the article pleads Mouton (2001:90).

The researcher is committed to go about doing this literature review on the role of the church with regard to economic development with integrity and will observe it in the most professional of ways.

### **1.11 Practical Theology**

This research will be done within the Practical Theology discipline. Following the view of Nel (2005:7), Practical Theology is about communicative acts that serve the Gospel and the Kingdom of God that has come and is yet to come. Practical Theology is concerned with the

doing of the truth as practice must conform to theory (Forrester 1990:5). As pointed out by Fowler (Browning 1991:149), Practical Theology is theological reflection and construction arising out of and giving guidance to a community of faith in the praxis of its mission. This view is shared by Forrester (1990:5) who states that Practical Theology is that branch of theology which is concerned with the questions of truth in relation to action. To speak of Practical Theology is to force the mind to form all kinds of images such as preach, prayer, console but also the ministry of lay men and women according to Conn (1990:109). Browning (1991:57) identifies with other practical theologians in that he views Practical Theology to be concerned with the examining of the church's strategy for creating and influencing the structures of care in the wider secular society. With Meyer's (2006:123) view that practical theology is to analyze and comprehend critical societal and personal issues as well as to determine what the specific message of the liberating gospel is for us today, it is fitting that the enquiry of scholar's view of the role of the church with regard to economic development is done in practical theology.

In essence Practical Theology is part of a larger theological enterprise that includes the specialties of exegetical, historical, systematic and fundamental theological inquiry and construction argues Browning (1983:149). The practice with which the theologian is concerned ranges in view of Forrester (1990:7) from the world-transforming political praxis to the practical faithfulness and love of the simple believer in work and relationships under girded by passion. A further aim of practical theology that will be helpful for research is that in view of Meyer (Practical theology in South Africa 2006:123) it attempts to create theories from systematic knowledge about society consequently characterizing the gospel.

Osmer (2008:17) states that practical theological interpretation involves four key tasks: the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative and the pragmatic. Together these four tasks constitute the basic structure for practical theological interpretation, states Osmer (2008:4, 10). The interaction and mutual influence of all four tasks distinguishes practical theology from other fields. Practical Theological interpretation creates a bridge between the sub disciplines of academic practical theology and between the academy and the church. This research would clearly in my view fit into the interpretive task described by Osmer (2008:4) as it will draw on theories to better understand and explain what conclusion can be drawn based on the literature review as to the role of the church in economic development.

Against the above background, it is proposed that the present study be conducted within the field of Practical Theology. This study links perfectly with the goals of Practical Theology that view formation of faith as a task of the church with its mission to equip the members for fruitful contributions in a pluralistic society as seen by Browning (1983:164). This view is supported by Heyns(1990:8) when he refers to Practical Theology as : “ die praktiese teologie is `n studie van die handelinge van mense wat daarop ingestel is om ander mense te help om God te ontmoet en met God en hul medemens in gemeenskap te lewe”.

Browning’s (1987:80) view of practical theology as a discipline suggests practical action and would therefore be public in the sense that it should attempt to relate the Christian message to the public world in all of its changing characteristics. One can relate the view of Forrester to the view of Browning when Forrester (1990:19) suggest that the findings of practical theology can be expected to be mostly in the form of concrete proposals for the restructuring of the church’s life of witness, fellowship and service.

The attempt of this research is to investigate how the church gives expression in terms of the literature under discussion, to the issues around economic development in reflecting its role as care-giver in society. One of the results of this research should indicate the link between practical theology and the role of the church with regard to economic development, if any.

### **1.12 Expected results and value of the study**

This research hopes to result in the following achievements by the researcher:

- To be informed of the views of scholars on the role of the church with regard to and economic development;
- To have insight into the literature with regard to the role of the church and economic development ;
- The church can be supplied with a resource that informs her of literature that deals with the role of the church with regard to economic development ;
- To explore research possibilities based on the literature review where possible shortcomings were identified.

### **1.14 Outline of the chapters**

#### **CHAPTER 1**

Chapter 1 provides the introduction and rationale for the study.

## CHAPTER 2

Chapter 2 will deal with the literature that presents the most authoritative scholarship on the concept “the church”.

## CHAPTER 3

This chapter will focus on the views of scholars on their understanding of what development and economic development mean.

## CHAPTER 4

This chapter will attempt to in light of the previous two chapters, present literature that deal with the role of the church in economic development.

## CHAPTER 5

Chapter 5 will offer a summary of what has been done in the previous chapters, presenting concluding remarks as well as mentioning possibilities for further research and recommendations if any is discovered.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF “THE CHURCH”**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

I do not see my task as constructing a definition for the role of the church in economic development, in terms of the search of the relevance of the church for its context, but the attempt will be to record the views of scholars on what they view as a definition for the church. August (2010: xii) argues that one cannot merely absolutise definitions of the church, but your attempt should be to give perceptions and interpretations that are subjective constructions of reality. Based on this view, the approach of this study will be to investigate literature in order to establish what is understood by the concept *ekklesia*, the mandate of the church, the missional and diaconal role of the church, the church as visible sign of God’s saving work and the church and liberation in view of scholars that contributed to construct the meaning of the role of the church.

The attempt of this thesis is to see how the task of practical theology, with the view of Veling (2005:141) in mind, can assist us in enquiring from literature if scholars are of the opinion that the church has an economic developmental role. The Catholic theologian Veling (2005:54) argues that to read and interpret the signs of God in the midst of the signs of life would be part of the essential task of practical theology and it is this that the church needs to be able to do.

The intention of this chapter is to investigate if there is something close to a scholarly consensus that might exist in terms of the role of the church in order to give meaning to the role of the church, the church in South Africa and if this is what the Rhenish Church has attempted to be after missionaries came to share the gospel to the communities in which it worked and is currently working. This chapter endeavours to spell out the church’s role as understood in confronting social-injustice and what responses can be expected in the search to establish the views of scholars with regard to the role of the church in economic development.

#### **2.2 THE BEGINNING OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH**

Lindbeck (2002:147) argues that the way we view the church must be biblically warranted and it must also be consistent with the total witness of Scripture. In light of this view

Lindbeck (2002:148) argues further that it is impossible to avoid the exegetical question of what were the biblical ways of understanding the church. Heyns, in trying to emphasise the importance of the role of the church, states that God has a residential address in this world – the church (Heyns 1980:61). The church need to be recognizable as God’s residential address in this world and this according to Heyns (1980:61) is achieved by the church’s unconditional obedience to God’s Word in its life and teaching as a religious institution. In accordance with this understanding the Dutch Reformed Church states in a document called Church and Society (1986:8) that in an old, broken, transient world God made a new beginning, brought into being a unique creation: His church.

Bible commentators and theologians speak of the happening on the day of Pentecost as ‘the birthday of the church’, that resulted in a communal life (Giles 1995:77). At Pentecost the church became a world-church, a church-for-the-world and therefore argues Heyns the church will have to be ‘*worldly*’ but will have to remain the Church in the world (Heyns 1980:98). In studying the Scriptures, Heyns (1980:186, 195) discovered that the church is something real, something concrete and visible and its message is aimed at recreating the whole human life as it emerges in creation. In trying to describe the church, Clowney (1995:108) suggest that the church is identifiable in the world as it has officers, its sacraments are outward signs of its faith and hope and the church is also visible through the members. Furthermore Clowney and Heyns understand that just as the church is both visible and invisible, the visible church is both local and universal (Clowney 1995:111, Heyns 1980:185). Therefore, if the visible church is both local and universal, Clowney (1995:114) believes that the church is found where the saints are found and are fulfilling their calling from Christ. The believers are the church, filled with the Spirit and doing the work of the Spirit in the world, be it homemakers, educators, lawyers, doctors, labourers, merchants or social workers (Clowney 1995:114).

The church according to Bloesch (2006:76) is an anticipatory sign of the kingdom that is coming with the church serving as the worldly agent of the kingdom. The point that Bloesch is trying to make is that the church is the place where kingly rule of Christ is made visible (Bloesch 2006:77).

The view of Alston (1984:125) of the church is that of a human community that in view of Heyns (1980:181) is distributed over the world, present in every age as an eschatological reality. The Church according to Küng (1973:35) is visible as a human fellowship and through its acts, through its preaching, through its teaching, its works and acts of mercy

demonstrate that it is church. This is why Küng argue that only a visible church can be home for human beings, a place where they can join in, give assistance and build (1973:35). The church of the present has a future and therefore has a critical role in ministering to the world with its many problems of the present still remaining unsolved (Küng 1973:39).

The term 'Church' in the vocabulary of St. Thomas Aquinas transcends the limits of time and space in that he sees the true church to be the heavenly Church upon which our earthly church is modelled (Dulles 1984:151). Theologians view as integral to the role of the church that it should be home for humans, a place where they can join in, give assistance and build up each other (Küng 1973:35, 39; Nel 2005:16; De Gruchy 1986:209).

The church is known by a wide array of names and by giving meaning to these names the church serve as an important social institution that provides hope, meaning and identity to millions of people ( Van Gelder 2002:15). Participation in the redemptive community involves no release from this common human task but must be seen as serving humanity and by doing so the church according to Kaufman (1968:480) is helping and keeping human life genuinely human. Boesak brings in the age-old African proverb, *motho ke motho ka batho babang* meaning: one is only human because of others, with others, for others to state the profound call on the church to be faithful to the Gospel truth that calls for respect for life, humanity and an alternative community (Boesak 1977:119). Bam mentions that it is African belief to accept that the world was created by God to be a good and important place for all people as evil according to the African world view results from sin and disorder (1995:47). The life the church has in Christ transforms the character of her communal existence and produces a community marked by a distinctive righteousness, intent upon the care of the needy as well as a commitment to equality quite unlike to the practice of the culture in which the church resides (Kysar 1991:76). In reflecting on Calvin, Smit (2010:183) make the discovery that Calvin view the church as not a mere human community of law or an association functioning on the basis of a constitution, but the church for him is the dynamic governance domain of Jesus Christ which functions on the basis of the Word through his Spirit. For Webber (1986:19), the church is indissolubly linked with Jesus Christ and His saving event, united with the exalted Lord and he therefore sees the church as an eschatological community. This is part of the reason why he sees the church like a two-edged sword in that it exposes evil and on the other hand it bears a responsibility to act as an agent of reconciliation and development.



## 2.3 THE MEANING OF EKKLESIA: A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Competent scholars come to different conclusions as to what it means when we find the word *Ekklesia* in the Bible and how we can derive from the use of the word if in any way part of the role of the church is seen as the economic development of her members. The Greek word *Ekklesia* is rendered by most English translations as ‘church’ as we will discover in the literature as set out in the next part of this chapter.

### 2.3.1 Ekklesia: The People called by God

According to Schillebeeckx (1985:42), *ekklesia* in everyday Greek denoted the assembly of the free citizens of a *polis* or city to hold elections. However, Schillebeeckx (1985:42) mentions that the N.T word *ekklesia* does not just mean the actual assembly of Christians, but above all the Christian group itself, whether local or dispersed house communities all over the then world.

De Gruchy (1995:50) noted that the word *ekklesia*, rather than synagogue was chosen by primitive Christianity to describe an Assembly of God’s people as this in his view distinguished the early Christians from the many voluntary clubs and private associations which existed in the Hellenistic world. In common Hellenistic usage, *ekklesia* was a political rather than a cultic term, describing an assembly of citizens gathered to exercise their civic responsibilities, according to De Gruchy (1995:51) and Watson (1978:65). This understanding of the church by the Hellenistic Christians, imply that Christians had a responsibility to ensure not only that their own community, but also a wider society was well governed argues De Gruchy (1995:51). This view would be supported by Watson (1978:65) as he understands *ekklesia* to be those who are called out with the wellbeing of everyone as a priority as described by William Barclay.. The Hebrew word *qahal* that can be translated into Greek as *ekklesia* carries similar meaning as it also refers to Israel as God’s called out ones, as people called for a relationship with God into a new community with a future inheritance states Watson (1978:67-74).

In view of Watson (1978:66), the word *ekklesia* is used in four different ways in the New Testament namely:

1. It is used of the *universal church*, the entire company of believers, both living and dead;

2. It is used as a *particular local church*, such as the church at Corinth, Thessalonica or Laodicea;
3. It can mean the *actual assembly* of believers in any place as they meet together to worship;
4. It can apply to a *small house church*, the regular meeting place for a small group of believers in any one city.

According to Heyns (1980:46), and Küng (1973:82), the word ‘church’ means ‘belonging to the Lord’ or belonging to the ‘house of the Lord’, like the Greek meaning of those called out who have been summoned together by the herald signifies people who have been called together. This calling together is God’s act and this for Heyns (1980:46) and Magezi (2007:68) gives meaning to the term *ekklesia* both in the Old and New Testament. This is why Magezi (2007:69) reasons that Israel can be referred to as the Old Testament church, while in the New Testament the church includes Jews and Gentiles. By embracing Christ through faith one becomes part of the church or then God’s people in view of Magezi (2007:69). Schillebeeckx (1985:42, 43) uses Apostle Paul’s use of *ekklesia* to state that all Christians are included in the *ekklesia* or then the universal Christian movement: the *ekklesia* of a province and of ‘all *ekklesia* of Christ’ (Rom.16:16) or ‘*ekklesia* of God’ (1 Cor.11:16, 22; 1 Thess.1:4).

The church as *ekklesia* for Neighbour (2000:58) is the house of God, but not the one of the Old Testament that was called the Tabernacle or Temple, but for him the house of God is made up by believers as living stones that are built up as a spiritual house. Based on this understanding, Neighbour (2000:58), understands the *ekklesia* no longer to be an edifice made by joining stones, but by joining human lives with Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit as the builder of the church and not that of skilled specialists as was in the case in the erection of the Tabernacle.

The church’s identity lies in it being ‘*the people called*’ from diverse sorts of bondages to freedom to a sense of identity founded on a common bond with the God of righteousness and compassion is how August (2010:44) views the *ekklesia*. For August (2010:44) thus, the understanding of church as the people called is engraved in the Greek word *ekklesia* that expresses the calling of people out from the broader community to become the community of God, for God’s redemptive purpose in the world. Giles (1995:112,113) on the other hand is of

the opinion that those who see the word *church* pregnant with theological content, tend to start with the text that speak of the church as a world-wide community based on verses like Acts 20:28; 1Cor.12:28; 1 Cor.15:9, etc... Those who take the word church simply to refer to Christians who form a local community by regularly assembling together, start with texts that use the word *ekklesia* of an actual gathering of believers as is found in 1 Cor.11:18, 14:19. For Heyns (1980:46) the *ekklesia* does not cease to exist when it is not gathered together merely because he believes that the church is not a static entity as God is continually concerned with calling people together.

Giles (1995:53; Watson (1978:65) draws our attention to the fact that in the Gospel of Matthew the word *ekklesia* are used in the famous saying following Peter's confession, 'you are the Christ, the Son of the living God'. In reply, Jesus says that this insight has been given by God, and then adds, "you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it (Matt.16:16-18)". Furthermore Giles (1995:53) indicates that Matthew also used the word church in the context of a discussion about what to do 'if your brother sin against you' (Matt.18:15,-17), Matthew advises after speaking to the brother with no success of solving the matter, 'tell it to the *church*, and if he refuses to listen even to the *church*, let him be to you like a gentile and tax collector'.

The church today is the descendants of a history of God's seeking to form with humans an abiding and blessing relationship so that when the church is faithful to this relationship and calling August (2010:45) reasons that it will embody the qualities of God's righteousness and compassion in all aspects of life. The church as *ekklesia* became the home for all in the sense that it developed to a point where it ceased to be sociologically a Jewish sect as the church then became *corpus mixtum* as viewed by Lindbeck (2002:152,153).

The biblical examination of *ekklesia* does not imply that we have exhausted the usage of the term *ekklesia* or church in the biblical understanding thereof, but for the purpose of this study we are of the opinion that enough light was shed.

## 2.4 THE MANDATE OF THE CHURCH

The church has as its mandate to accentuate the holistic meaning of the Gospel of salvation and as a result the church proclaims that the Gospel message intend not only to change people's lives, but also their relationships, it change structures and it intends to change the world according to Koegelenberg (1992:3). Bloesch (2002:63) argues that the church has as

its mandate to be a worshipping community as well as being a nurturing community. The mission work done by the Rhenish Mission Society was directly motivated by the commission Christ gave his disciples in Matthew 28:19, 20 that in view of Strassberger (1969:89) did include the economic development of the recipients. The church is a teacher as well as a mother and at the same time the church is given the charge to be a witness and herald and channel of God's grace according to Bloesch (2002:59). In accord with Christ's threefold office, the church is called to a threefold task of proclamation as outlined by the document of the Dutch Reformed Church, Church and Society (1986:9):

- In its **prophetic task** the church proclaims the kingdom's saving message, summoning all to repent, to believe the Gospel and so become partakers of eternal life.
- In its **priestly task** by word and action the church proclaims God's love and reconciliation between man and fellow man.
- In its **kingly task** the church proclaims the demand for the sanctifying of our lives and for God's justice, which must and will triumph over all injustice and evil powers.

The implication of the view by Koegelenberg (1992:3) and that of the Dutch Reformed Church as indicated above, implies that the church should take development seriously, because development is ultimately about a new vision for society and the experience of full life that God is giving. The church for Bloesch (2002:32) is not itself the kingdom of God but a poignant sign and witness of the inbreaking of the kingdom into human history. Croft (1987:109) stresses the fact that the New Testament, when referring to 'church' never describes a building but a particular group of people. He further argues that the church is not simply a human organization and a society invented by the early Christians, but that God called the church into being with a purpose and a mandate, thus Croft (1987:110). The purpose of God's call according to Croft (1987:110), from the very beginning, is clearly not just for the blessing of Abram's descends, but in order for the called ones to be a community such that all the people on earth will be blessed through them. After studying Gutierrez, Brown (1990:58) came to the conclusion that the church is obliged to employ its resources and personnel to give preference to the poorest and neediest. Scholars like Boesak (1987:53) and Bloesch (2006:64) would argue that part of the mandate of the church is to seek justice for the victims, to seek liberation for the oppressed, to seek reconciliation as her Lord has

done and to be involved in works of mercy. This is part of the reason it can be understood according to Koopman (2008:35) that the protest of the Confessing Church in Germany during the Nazi regime and the public involvement and witness of so called struggle churches during the quest for inclusive democracy during the first decade of democracy in South Africa bear witness to the redemptive role of religion and theology.

The church, if properly functioning according to James (1992:81), should be a carrier of information and values that would help stabilise and build the society in which she find herself. In the words of Bloesch (2002:64) the church is basically “a life support system not only enabling its members to survive in a cruel and hostile world but also empowering them to prevail over the principalities and powers of this world”. Essentially Villa-Vicencio (1992:31) sees the church playing the role of transcending seemingly impregnable barriers and enabling people to reach towards what some regard as impossible dreams. De Gruchy mentions (1995:122) that the basis of the Barmen Declaration adopted at a synod in October 1934, the Confessing church in Germany regarded its task and mandate as a struggle for the gospel and the freedom of the church from Nazi ideology. In commenting on the views of Karl Barth, Bentley (2007:1647) recalls a speech made by Barth where Barth stated the following: “Jesus is the movement for social justice and the movement for social justice is Jesus in the present. Rieger (2009:160) states that it is often overlooked that God is the one who locates Godself alongside the oppressed and against the oppressor.

The main mandate and obligation of the church according to Kameeta (2007:3), is that of being there for the poor and marginalized in society as Jesus taught us: *“I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me”* (Mt. 25:45). In short and precise words, justice and dignity for the poor remains the yardstick for any system, and the Church has to act according to God’s will and Jesus’ example in how to bring about justice and dignity for God’s creation and within human society. Sharing in God’s mission is an outworking of the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves as well as to be good stewards of the whole of creation according to Croft (1987:138).

## **2.5 THE CHURCH AS VISIBLE SIGN OF GOD’S SAVING WORK**

The church exists for others as the visible sign of God’s saving work and therefore as the visible sign of the presence of the Lord and a redemptive community, is the position of Bloesch (2006:58). The church has no option then to aspire for liberation in the struggle for a

more humane and just society as well as to testify in this world in order to make the saving work of God visible according to Webber (186:201) and Heyns (1980:63). The best way for the church to demonstrate its salvific role and so as sign of God's presence, according to Webber (1986:201), is to cast its lot with the oppressed and the exploited in their struggle for a just society, even if it means being critical of itself and of its own economic security. The church for Bloesch (2002:58) plays an important role in directing sinners to Christ. As Heyns (1980:103) argues that the church has a mission to spread the Gospel as spreading the Gospel does not mean merely to save people's souls, but it also mean to make it possible for the mercy of the God of creation re-creatively to permeate the whole of creation and leaven every part of human society. Bloesch (2006:59) would argue that the church is the mouthpiece of Christ and by so doing communicates the salvific effects to its own people and to the world. It is interesting to note how Veling's argument (2005:142), that practical theology sees theory and practice as partners that belong together, give meaning to Heyns' view as mentioned above.

The cry of those who suffer, need to be heard and if they are not heard by others, Rieger (2009:160) argues that then we are not able to grasp the work of God in the world as observed by the Catholic theologian, Jung Mo Sung.

Webber (1986:160) clearly chooses to understand the role of the church to be in terms of God's visible saving act, a force that can resolve the conflict of the oppressed and the oppressor as the church naturally participates in the class struggle, seeking in the name of Jesus to release the poor and the oppressed so as to humanize human's situation and move towards brotherhood and sisterhood. People must be brought under the liberating rule of God and thus as liberated people, liberate everything around them seeing that the church is included in the mission then mission is its task according to Heyns (1980:104). The narratives of the Old Testament attributes every act of liberation to Yahweh and then the intervention of Yahweh is described as so overpowering that it eliminates the human evil and then make the victory completely miraculous argues Tamez (1983:61).

One can just wonder if one can deduce from the views of scholars that the economic development of people might also be seen as part of God's saving act as facilitated by the church.

## **2.6 THE MISSIONAL MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH**

The ministry of the church, argues McKee (1989:28), is service, first to God and then to the neighbour, the one flowing inevitably from the other. Essential according to John Calvin's theology, Webber states (1986:130) that Calvin view the church as the instrument of God's universal purpose and that no other institution in the world is so endowed with God's blessing and favour and thus for this reason the work of the church is the ceaseless activity of bringing order out of chaos. Webber (1986:134) furthermore investigates Calvin, resulting in discovering that Calvin believed that anyone who really loves other people cannot be selfish and he therefore believe that the rich have a mission to the poor. The message of the Gospel according to Bloesch (2002:34) has profound social and political implications and ramifications although the gospel itself is not a political message but the power of redeeming transformation as this is manifested in Jesus' life, death and glorious resurrection. Clearly this view of Bloesch challenges the fundamentalist views of evangelicals who according to Bloesch (2002:34) insists that the church has a fundamentally spiritual mission. Compelled by the love of Christ and as God's own people who must proclaim God's saving acts one of the denominations in South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church, in their document Church and Society (1986:11) viewed the missional function of the church as proclaiming the message of the kingdom to all nations and to every individual as the church for them is nothing but a missionary community.

Küng (1973:72), draws attention to how Jesus Christ saw the mission of the church in the fact that Jesus stresses a public ministry that rejects withdrawal from the world, that love sinners, a mission not to gather up the 'just' but to gather up the *whole* Israel. The focal point of the church in view of Küng (1973:80) is the reign of God. A Church, which overlooks the fact that it is called to the selfless service of humanity, of its enemies and of the world, loses its dignity and the justification of its existence according to Küng (1973:99). This view of Kung would probably challenge the church to ask the question if seen as part of its role of the church is the economic development of the members. This implies clearly that Küng (1973:394) wanted to see the church involved in all spheres of life that might by implication include the economic development of the community it serves. Being a fellowship of gifts of the spirit and a fellowship of different ministries makes the Church functional and edifying to the community.

The whole church according to Williams (1975:101) was called to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, leaven and so sharing in the task of carrying on the ministry of Christ He



exercised in His body during His life on earth. The Church exists for the world by being committed to the world and is therefore in pro-existence and involved in the world according to Küng (1973:486).

Alston (1984:124,126) states that the missional ministry of the church is influenced by the world, by the needs and problems of contemporary society but the ministry of the church is a given in the fact that it bears witness to Jesus Christ and to God's renovating activity revealed and demonstrated by the church as it proclaims the Gospel. The Dutch Reformed theologian, W.A. Visser 'T Hooft's view is taken into consideration by Alston (1984:125) when he argues that the ministry of the church is to bear witness to Christ and to testify to the world that the church exists to serve the purpose of God. Precisely this view by Alston (1984:125) suggest that the task of the church is that of a servant of reconciling, restoring the grace of God and the outcome or results of its service must be left in the hands of God. For Heyns (1980:103) the responsibility of the church regarding unbelievers is known as mission and he therefore argues that the church is in essence a missionary church. Alston (1984:128) further reasons that the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel by the church does not take place in a vacuum, but in relation to the particular human realities, needs, questions, problems and possibilities in which it lives. Long (2000:117) would find meaning in this view of Alston in that he understands that Cone suggests that Marx recognized that one's social location determines consciousness.

As a missional church the hope of the church today according to Bloesch (2002:35) lies in a vibrant confession of faith that cuts across all denominational and sectarian lines and that speaks to the burning issues of the time.

## **2.7 THE CHURCH AND DIAKONIA**

The church's calling includes the exercise of compassion like Jesus Christ who came to serve and by so doing has entrusted the diaconal ministry to his church (Church and Society 1986:11, 12). Tsele (2001:215) remind the church that like the ministry of Jesus was one of helping those in need, without considering ideologies, religious or political pressure, so nothing should stop us from doing good to those in need like Jesus did.

Diakonia is the church's service to the world, a reflector of grace through the practice and fellowship of Christian love according to Bloesch (2002:63) and McKee (1989:47). For McKee (1989:14), one of the important implications of the role of the church as a caring



community, is that all Christians are obligated to love their neighbours because all accepted this service as God's will. The social action or *diakonia* by the church as practical Christian service to the world, according to McKee (1989:4) and the official report of the Larnaca Consultation of 1986(1987:16), is rightly considered a manifestation of faith in God. The church historian, McKee (1989:64) draws our attention to the caring role of the church in mentioning that John Calvin taught that the diaconate role of the church is seen as a permanent ecclesiastical ministry of care for the poor and sick and the physical suffering of human beings. The caring church according to Karl H. Neukamm at the Larnaca Consultation (1987:65) has inherited a type of diaconal service that includes support for the elderly and handicapped, drug addicts, asylum seeker, the unemployed, the unprotected and the disadvantaged. This calling of the church according to the Dutch Reformed Church's view in Church and Society (1986:12) is all-inclusive whether through particular offices, official bodies, or believers in all spheres of daily life and is totally different from a merely humanitarian approach. Strassberger (1969:55) mentions that for the Rhenish missionaries the church was the centre of activity for a large group of people as the educational, commercial and occupational aspects of their lives pivoted on this inner spiritual core.

How then must we understand the role of the church in terms of *diakonia*? The rest of this part of the chapter will attempt to inform us based on the literature that was investigated.

### **2.7.1 Diakonia as Intervention**

The church is called to work against the grain of ordinary human desire, to give herself even to her enemies and by so doing mediating God's reconciling love in the world argues Kaufman (1968:496) and Bosch (1982:10). In reference to the Latin America context, Handelman (2006:60) observed that it was the church that offered a shield against political repression and the church also became the voice for the poor. In studying Gutierrez, Long (2000:156) made the discovery that in Gutierrez's theological world scarcity does not exist but it exists primarily as an absurdity that can be eradicated because of the fullness of love present in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ demonstrated by the church. Aarflot's view (1988:80), as referred to in chapter one, indicates to us a very meaningful role that he believes the church has when he states that whenever human life is threatened by evil, the church is by necessity a part of the struggle for victory, for a better world and human dignity for humankind as the church always find herself against any form of destruction. Dulles' argument (1984:79) would be in line with what Bosch (1982:10) understands of the

role of the church when he states that the church must have the courage to take it upon itself the suffering of the weak, the poor, the bewildered and the downtrodden and must be free to forget its immediate self-interest.

In studying the Gospel of Luke, Miranda (1982:58) concludes that a society in which there are rich and poor would intrinsically be immoral, since it implies that the latter is exploiting the former. One can understand that the Larnaca Consultation of 1986 (1987:124), when some 300 participants came together to deepen their theological understanding of diakonia, came to the conclusion that the church must act to ensure a decent life with dignity for all while advocating that economic and social structures which perpetuate inequality and poverty must be placed by a new economic order that ensures full participation for all. For Robert Kysar (1991:74) the society of the church was a single, seamless fabric by virtue of its baptism in Christ as the social distinction between slaves and the free was overcome in the Christian community.

The early Christians first used the word *ekklesia* simply to refer to their assemblies and only with the passing of time did the word develop so as to mean a local community and later it developed to mean the world-wide community of Christians where care needs to be taken when suffering is experienced (Giles 1995:83).

### **2.7.2 The Church as Catholic Consensus doing Diakonia**

The catholicity of the church refers to its universality and inclusivity as well as its continuity with the ancient traditions of the church argues Bloesch (2002:101). In view of Giles (1995:86), the use of *ekklesia* in Acts 20:28 is significant in the sense that Luke here indicates that the word can refer to a universal reality without geographical limitations. One can deduce from this view that Giles (1995:113) advocates that *ekklesia* in the New Testament times were used to refer to an actual assembly of people. From this view it is clear according to Bloesch (2002:101) that unity and catholicity go together because if the church is one it must be universal and if it is universal it must be one with the goal to serve and represent God in this world. Giles (1995:54) wants us to understand that Jesus refers to building a community with a unitary collective identity where all are cared for, based on the confession that He is the Christ, the Messiah and the Builder.

We are reminded by Bloesch (2002:39) that theologians from all communities generally endorse the classical marks of the church as contained in the Nicene Creed – oneness,

holiness catholicity and apostolicity. Giles (1995:145) concludes with the view that the church, as the totality of the Christian community on earth has a distinct dignity and role in the cosmos and the members of the church are part of a great plan that God is working out. August (2010:45) is convinced that the church as a community of faith in the Bible is not only the record of a human process, but he believes that the church can be seen as a collective human response to a divinely initiated relationship within which God has been fashioning a people called to participate in the unfolding of a divine plan for creation. According to Giles (1995:185), the term *ekklesia* when used theologically, means the Christian community as a title that speaks of those bound together by their common bond with Christ universally. The argument by Bloesch (2002:101) in reference to catholicity is that if the church is universal, it must be one. This should be a community in which the ethnic origin, the social status of frees or bond and the gender distinction of persons are essentially irrelevant (Kysar 1991:74). The whole Christian community is called to be a “kingdom of priests” serving the world and by so doing Williams (1975:101) reckons the church will then collectively penetrate the life of the nations. In support of the view of Kysar, Heyns (1980:38) would agree in that no one can be excluded from the church if the exclusion is based on ethnic considerations. Like his master, the slave could be admitted to this community and this Heyns (1980:38) is an important supporting statement that the church is universal (Heyns 1980:38). Heyns (1980:38) further states that the community of the Jesus was not identical to the empirical nation of Israel. It is through the church as the alternative community that God seeks the dissemination of the good news for a new age where the members are the agents of divine care in this world (Kysar 1991:76).

Roy (1995:807) reckons that the economic sharing of the earliest Christian Church serve as an indisputable act with evidence in the book of Acts of economic sharing. The giving of surplus income to all needy believers was not enough as they regularly dipped into capital reserves, selling property to aid the needy and share in acts of caring (Roy 1995:807). The church is a new community guided by new rules on its way to a new dispensation that through its obedience and because of its obedience was shaped as a caring community (Heyns 1980:84, 85). The view of Dulles (1984:73) suggest that the church is in some respects more like a family than like an industry, for in it love and concern rather than economic self-interest are determinative. It does not come as a surprise that the church is called to be a one caring community in view of Bosch (1982:10), and he therefore believes that the church was

called to:’ Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who treat you spitefully (Matt.5:43) and by so doing Jesus called his followers to include the excluded as a fundamental new criteria for being church. Sharing was voluntary, not compulsory, but the love for the brothers and sisters was so overwhelming in the early church, that many freely abandoned legal claims to private possessions to meet the needs according to Roy (1995:808). According to Giles (1995:77), the Gospel writer St. Luke highlights the mutual dependence of the early believers when he mentions how they ‘had all things in common’, so that there were no needy among them (2:44-45; 4:32-37). In a similar way as Luke, St. Matthew understands the church to be a community with a communal life with every member having a ministry argues Giles (1995:62). For Gustavo Gutierrez, the church as the caring community would always be involved in diakonia and addressing issues that cause material poverty and lack of economic goods necessary for a life worthy of the name (Brown 1990:56). Interestingly Dulles (1984:71), states that the church is a place where members submit in faith to the liberating action of Christ and where they collectively participate actively in Christ’s liberating actions in the world. The implication of this view is that the church member is both a person being liberated and a person taking part in the liberation of many others (Dulles 1984:71). In summary Dulles(1984:72) argues that the church cannot allow its members to nullify its corporate impact and therefore obviously have to condemn certain positions, acts and policies contrary to the faith that give grounds for expulsion from the community.

Maggay (1994:37) recognised the birth of a new social order that Christ has brought about in Paul’s pronouncement that “...in Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free’ (Galatians 3:28). Bosch (1982:15) and Maggay (1994:37) note that Jesus, by destroying all human definitions of community, included the seemingly useless people: the blind, the lame and the lepers who were normally excluded, cut across the fabric of a civilization borne on the back of slaves, gender inequality and racial division. Furthermore Bosch (1982:15) notes that also included in this new community was the traitors and the exploiters as well as the Samaritans and Romans, who were traditionally seen as the ‘enemies’ of the Jews. The inclusion of the Gentiles according to Lindbeck (2002:151) as well as Heyns (1980:49) suggests that this was the beginning of the new humanity, as the beginning of the gathering of all humankind into God’s people. Using Heyns’ reasoning one can ask the question if he would therefore be of the opinion that the one catholic church has

an economic development role.

The early church Sider (1995:808) argues dared to give concrete, visible expressions to the oneness of believers and this acts still stand as a constant challenge to the Church of all ages.

### **2.7.3 The Church as Oikos in Civic Life**

The Catholic theologian, Thomas Aquinas was convinced that if we love God above all else and if we love our neighbour in God, we create the possibility of achieving perfect accord and peace among the human family on earth, argues Dulles (1984:149). The church for Aquinas argues Dulles (1984:151), would be those who are brought into union with God and exists then for the sake of the Kingdom of God and is demonstrated in civic life where diakonia is expressed.

According to Schillebeeckx (1985:46), the basic structure of the earliest communities of Christian believers was the same as what was then the basic unit of civic life in the cities, namely the household or *oikos*. Furthermore Schillebeeckx (1985:46) notes that the *oikos* or household of that time had greater cohesion than our modern family in that servant, slaves and others also belonged to 'the house'. The result was clearly that the Christian groups were integrated into an already existing network of what Schillebeeckx (1985:46) call 'face to face' relationships both internally ( other members of the household, relatives, servants) and externally ( friends, acquaintances, clients and often people with the same profession or calling). The advocate of the Cell Church Structure, Neighbour (2000:60), mentions that the house church in the early church functioned from their inception as the nucleus of the Christian community where all members are to exercise spiritual gifts to edify the others.

The house became the place of meeting where preaching, instruction, celebration and support was given and received by men and women of all levels of the population argue Schillebeeckx (1985:46). It is within these locations, according to Neighbour (2000:63) that values were shared while equippers of the saints for the work of their ministry arose from within the house groups. Membership to these households brought together people who were socially very mixed while at the same time they shared meals, cared for each others needs as Paul for instance asked communities to care for others.

The house communities, at the end of the New Testament and more in the first half of the

second century shifted to ‘the greater house’ or to ‘the household of God’ where members were kind of subjected to one authority according to Schillebeeckx (1985:66, 67). We are cautioned by Schillebeeckx (1985:68) that the contextualization of Christianity in the Greco-Roman times asked of the early church to adapt in order to be able to live peacefully as Christians in a culture which was alien to Christianity. The example given by Schillebeeckx (1985:68) is the situation of slavery and the subjection of women, that was taken over, despite the protest against it in the light of the gospel from the early church that states that we now have : ‘ neither male nor female, slave nor free...’ .

Early Christianity was a brotherhood and sisterhood of equal partners on the basis of the baptism of the Spirit theologically and sociologically on the basis of the Roman Hellenistic model of free societies hence Schillebeeckx (1985:47). The church represented by the Christian community are bearers of the subversive, dangerous memory of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus and that is why Boeve (2007:203) reckons the church actively seek out the boundaries of life and are moved by the human histories of suffering, that compel them toward a preferential option for the poor, the suffering and the oppressed in this world.

Paul’s apostolic journeys and foundation of new church communities in Asia Minor indicates that his aim was to find a solid Christian community and after building up such communities, he would leave but have some degree of assurance that they will care for each other and serve as an active centre from which the mission could be carried on in cities both nearer and further away according to Schillebeeckx (1985:104,122). One can deduce from Schillebeeckx’s view that if there is no specialized concentration of what is important to everyone in the church, in the long run the church community will suffer as a result and therefore it seems as if economic development of each members is an implied role that the church had.

#### **2.7.4 The Church as Change Agent through Diakonia**

Mugambi (2003:13, 41) would be in agreement with Webber and Van Gelder that the church is a change agent when he view the church as one of reconstruction as he uses the metaphor of the community that takes full responsibility to rebuild the wall under Nehemiah’s guidance taking hold of their future and rejecting the ideological propaganda which portrays them as helpless and hopeless.

Aptly, Van Gelder (2002:13, 41) emphasized that the word *church* carries many meanings and the church never existed in a vacuum. Van Gelder’s (2002:41) hypothesize is that the

church exists within a specific context and therefore means that every context requires expressions for understanding the role of the church within her context. The form and life of the church, states Smit (2008:278), should also witness to its confession, to the truth of the gospel and the good news it proclaims.

The inclusion of the circumcised in the covenant with Abraham, constitute the formation of a different people, thus Lindbeck (2002:151). This examples helps us to demonstrate that the new community was different and the examples showed how Jesus was undermining all the values upon which religion, economics, politics and that society was based, hence Bosch (1982:15). A radically new age was introduced by Jesus and this is part of the reason why it can be referred to of the church as a 'new creation' (Bosch 1982:17). The point that Bosch is making with reference to the Apartheid era in South Africa is that conversion from our old ways and joining the new community, means a demolishing of old ramparts and allowing God to transform us so that we no longer judge by human standards ( Bosch 1982:27,28). Strassberger (1969:96) draws our attention to the fact that because of the gospel preached by the Rhenish Missionaries, the Christian influence raised the standard of living, better housing was provided and a more disciplined lifestyle was promoted. The one characteristic of this kind of conversion and becoming part of the community in solidarity in view of Bosch (1982:28) is that this community is known as one of *compassion*, and suffering with the other. The view of Bosch is shared by Kysar (1991:68) who believes that the biblical record of the church points to the church being a community with alternative norms and structures as that of the society in which it finds itself. It is in a community like this that there is no one on top or beneath, mutual affection and reciprocal support is given. This style of living by a community that would include tax-collectors, fishermen, blacks from Africa, slaves and imperial guards, would be contrary to the conventional way that people behave (Bosch 1982:30). Villa-Vicencio (1992:33) mentions that it would be normal for the church to be involved in nation-building otherwise the church will loose her moral right to provide prophetic critique of the new society. When viewed this way, the church according to Mangalwadi (1987: 199) is meant to stand against the forces of oppression and death because Christ gave it the mandate to feed his lambs and tend to his sheep.

According to Van Gelder (2002:41) the church must have the ability to translate the eternal truths of God into relevant forms of actions within any context. Based on this view, Van Gelder (2002:25) is of the opinion that the church serves and exists in the world as a human



enterprise, but also as a people of God the church is created by the Spirit to live as a missionary and witnessing community. In no uncertain terms Heyns (1980:64) argues that if the church dissociates itself from this task, either by misinterpreting the facts, or withholding them, or by replacing them with its own interpretation, or by adding to them its own interpretation, then the church has forfeited the right to exist as the witnessing Church of Christ intending to have a changing effect on society.

The following examples places emphasis on the fact that the ministry of the church is understood to be one of responsiveness to the context as Van Gelder (2002:21) mentions the following roles given to the church:

- 1 Seeker- Sensitive Church. Emphasizes conducting worship services shaped for evangelism of unchurched persons.
- 2 Purpose-Driven Church. - Emphasizes defining clearly the purpose of the church around core functions and building intentional processes of discipling.
- 3 Small-Group Church. - Emphasizes making small groups the critical infrastructure for church life in complement with gathered celebrative worship.
- 4 User-Friendly Church. - Emphasizes developing processes around key biblical principles that attract people into high-commitment communities.
- 5 Seven-Day-a-Week Church. - Emphasizes expanding group-based, weekday ministries as multiple points of entry into the life of the church.
- 6 Church for the 21 Century. - Emphasizes developing a church as a major anchor of ministry that can specialize in a variety of niche markets.

In mentioning part of the functions of the church as gathered from literature by Van Gelder, one must ask the question whether the function of the church as change agent includes the economic development of its members. Does the church exist for this function also?

Interestingly August ( 2010:46) remarks that the church should always be involved in social action as he builds his argument around his understanding that Jesus did not separate human developmental needs from spiritual needs. The answer Jesus gave on the question: 'Teacher which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' August indicates to us that Jesus' answer imply that human completeness is found in responding to spiritual, social and physical needs together ( August 2010:46). The church as people of God is summoned by their faith and therefore need to dedicate them to the building of the kingdom of God (Tamez 1983:84).



In her quest to address the struggle of women, Reuther (1988:45) states that the New Testament church can also be defined as an exodus community, although its exodus is not simply from historical occasion of servitude, but is the ultimate exodus of the people of God from historical conditions of servitude. Clearly Tamez (1983:61,62) understand the role of the church as a partner of Yahweh in that she sees the agent of change and liberation being Yahweh acting through the church as Yahweh always comes to the scene in solidarity with the oppressed, for the purpose of assuring the concrete realisation of love and the removal of oppressors.

## **2.8 LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND THE CHURCH**

The role of the church in economic development viewed from a practical theological point of view according to Veiling (2005:146) is that practical theology would always be representative of God's mercy and justice. Veiling (2005:175) clearly view practical theology as typically associated with the quest for justice and liberation, with the plight of the poor and the oppressed, with the need to address the social, political and economic realities that shape the lives of millions of human beings who are often left to suffer the sickness of the world. With this view in mind the intention of this part of the chapter is to investigate what liberation theology would offer to the debate about the role of the church in economic development from the viewpoint of development as viewed by scholars.

### **2.8.1 The Praxis of Liberation**

Reflection requires action just as action requires reflection as they are not one or the other but in view of Veling they go hand-in-hand, hence Veling (2005:142).

With its praxis so deeply rooted in overcoming oppression, it is not surprising for Clarke (2011:126) that the concept of salvation is also perceived as an aim for the present rather than as a concern following death. The praxis of liberation has given rise to new approaches to interpretation of the Bible with the Latin American historical experience of oppression and liberation as the root of its theological work according to Tamez (1983:4). Tamez (1983:15) contended that since oppression or deprivation is obviously a situation that is neither acceptable nor tolerable, a moment comes when the weight of it provokes unrestrained tears, cries of pain, and a call for liberation and development. In Latin America masses of people lived in extreme difficult circumstances such as high inflation, unemployment, lack of housing, malnutrition, exploitation and poverty. The reality was that the ruling class, as in

first century Palestine, collaborated in the expansion of the wealthy nations while the economies of the Latin American countries were dependent on foreign nations who saw them as a source of raw material and cheap labour according to Tamez (1983:67).

In such a situation liberation theologians, representing the church, believed that the Good News came that states that this extreme poverty, exploitation and deprivation of human well-being is not God's will, but the liberation from any form of injustice to a situation of dignity advocate Tamez (1983:69). The church has no other option, based on its ministry in view of Alston (1984:128), than to love those whom God love, to proclaim and to explicate the gospel in love to those God love and therefore the church need to acquaint itself with the context within which it operates. Alston (1984:128) further argues that the church, in being effective, needs to equip itself to deal constructively with the challenges of its context. With the liberation theologians attempting to understand their context and what the Gospel message would mean to their context, one must once again take note that Veling (2005:161) stresses the view of Stephen Bevans that argues that contextualisation is a theological imperative. In more simple terms Veling (2005:161) wants us to understand that contextual theology cannot take place in a human vacuum.

McKee's (1989:29) argument that the Reformer, John Calvin would see the two chief obligations of the church community as *pietas* piety or devotion and *caritas* love, would bring him in agreement with the intention of liberation theology in that the Christian has two principal foci: God and neighbour.

### **2.8.2 A basis for Liberation Theology and the Church**

De Vries (2007:191) draws our attention to the Bible through Gutierrez, the Peruvian priest, when he states that God manifested Godself as the defender of the weak in the place of the powerful, upholding the human worth and choosing for the poor and exploited. The term liberation theology in view of Clarke (2011:119) came from Gustavo Gutierrez's 1973 book, *The Theology of Liberation*, as a theological description to explain the understanding of economic development and the practical impact this may have on the lives of the poor with whom it engages.

The consequences of liberation theology for economic development according to De Vries(2007:191) was that it drew attention to the unjust effects of certain economic regimes, exposed structural deficiencies of industry and agriculture and also exposed the belief that

raw material producing countries remain poor while the industrialized countries enrich themselves. Clearly this view of De Vries imply that the role of the church would be in this context to empower those who suffer from these economic injustices into a new self-worth and self-respect, which is so essential for a genuine new economic beginning. The church for McKee (1989:109), from a diaconal view, should emphasize preventive action, must have a concern for justice and be involved in empowering its members.

Writing from a perspective of those oppressed by poverty and sexism, Elsa Tamez (1983:3) draws our attention to the biblical message of freedom from oppression. According to Tamez (1983:5), the principle motive for oppression is the eagerness to pile up wealth while the Bible message is one of love and liberation. The poor help us discover the conflict in our society that is based on class, race, culture and gender as the church move into the world of the poor, the outcast, the exploited and the needy hence Boff (1993:121).

Liberation theology, by making of theology a critical reflection on the praxis of liberation, places the gospel in its authentic perspective, namely that of liberation argues Boesak (1977:15). Boesak (1977:15, 19) and August (2010:47) views the involvement of church in the liberation struggle as inevitable, based on their conviction that the God of the Bible is the God of liberation rather than oppression, a God of justice rather than injustice, a God of freedom and humanity rather than enslavement and subservience, a God of love, righteousness and brotherhood rather than hatred, self-interest and exploitation. The oppressed are in view of Tamez (1983:53) the impoverished, the slaves, the day labourers, the widows, the resident aliens and orphans who lack both social standing and power. The church as the community of followers of Jesus Christ, August (2010:47) believe, is bound by God's all-encompassing dedication and commandment towards those mentioned by Tamez (1983:53) and towards addressing their needs by virtue of their identification with God. De Vries (2007:190) note that people like Gustavo Gutierrez and Leonardo Boff preached the gospel of Christ while working with the poor and found in the Bible a rich source of encouragement to strengthen the downtrodden and lift them up to a position of greater dignity and productivity. For the Brazilian theologian, Boff, his liberation theological perspective on the role of the church, helped him to understand what part of the mission of the church is and kind of development the society would need as a result of this understanding (Boff 1993:122). The ultimate image of the church, in view of practical theology scholar, Ignatius Swart (2004:335), is that of a church in, through and around which a comprehensive mix of

initiatives for enduring spiritual, economic and social renewal will develop. These liberation theologians in the Latin American context understood the role of the church to be one of setting their parishioners free from oppression and an unproductive tradition by giving them a new insight into the Bible, thus De Vries (2007:190). Seeking the just rights of any person who is being treated unfairly is a way of honouring God as this according to Calvin as viewed by McKee (1989:108), is the demonstration of love for the neighbour.

The church's story, understood as continuous with Israel's, tells of God doing what God has done before: choosing and guiding a people to be a sign and witness in all it is and does, whether obedient or disobedient, by being the communal sign of the promised redemption according to Lindbeck (2002:157,159).

### **2.8.3 The agenda that Liberation Theology gives to the Church**

Liberation theology sets in motion a reformation in the late twentieth century argues De Vries(2007:195), that supplied the church with a biblical view to make a 'preferential option for the poor' and give full respect to basic human rights, including the right to employment and food. The action that liberation theology seeks to undertake as viewed by Clarke (2011:121), has the grand aim of changing the world as it seeks to attain new social goals based on scripture with six primary perspectives that shape its approach namely:

1. The oppressed and the poor are the starting point for all action and reflection.
2. The person from whom liberation theology exists is the nonperson' – the poor for whom existing structures deprive them of living full human lives.
3. Its analytical tools derive predominantly from the social sciences rather than traditional theology.
4. It utilises Marxist 'reality as conflict' to shape its analysis issues.
5. Praxis is the first act.
6. Theological consideration must (and can only) follow praxis.

Long (2000:112) observes that Gutierrez is of the opinion that modern society suffers because basic Christian principles were given no room in its construction.

For the church's solidarity with the poor or the world never means conformity as Heyns

(1980: 98) rightly states that the church does not stand outside the world and so in a sense the world provides the agenda for the church. Precisely this understanding of the role of the church in the world by liberation theologians and the view that Heyns (1980:98), has brought him to the point where he clearly attached the role of the church to be one that cannot pass issues like wealth and poverty, integration and segregation, discrimination, pollution of nature, strikes and inflation, natural catastrophes like drought and floods without the church making comments about it in terms of Scripture.

Liberation theology, which Boesak(1977:18) prefer to refer to as Black theology, calls on the church to bring the gospel as a relevant message to people who have lost their self-respect, who are denied human dignity and who are trying to come to grips to the dehumanizing facets in life.

## **2.9 TRACES OF THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The exact religious practices of people living more than 500 years ago in South Africa remain rather elusive but the advent of Christianity, which first appeared permanently in the mid seventeenth century, was probably the most severe challenge to confront African traditional religions according to Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994: xxiii, xxiv). It is however true that the church has always been important in South Africa (Bam in *Being the Church in South Africa* 1995:44).

### **2.9.1 First traces of Christianity in the Cape Colony**

The history of the Reformed tradition in South Africa unofficially started in 1652 from a refreshment station to an agricultural colony with Jan van Riebeeck as the commander and having with him white immigrants and finding the indigenous Khoikhoi, Hottentots and Bushmen people at the Cape according to Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994: 3), Hofmeyr, Millard and Froneman (1991:6), Adonis (2000:4) and Hinchliff (1968:4).

The Protestant tradition had its origins in South Africa with the arrival of the Dutch in 1652, the early German settlers in the 1660's and the French Huguenots in 1688 (Hofmeyr and Pillay 1994: 10). The Reformed faith, sometimes called ' Calvinism' was one of the principle branches of the Protestant Reformation that was according to Gerstner (1997:16) united on two basic points of doctrine: on salvation and on the source of authority within the church.

Having initially brought a sick comforter with in 1652 that performed some of the duties of a

minister; it was only in 1665 that the first minister, Johan van Arckel, arrived to commence his ministry where one church service was held on a Sunday morning argues Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994: 11). The arrival of the first permanent minister was followed by the election of a church council and so the spiritual affairs was entrusted to the church council with the decisions made by the church council being subject to approval by the Council of Policy or then the government (Hofmeyr and Pillay 1994: 19).

With the Edict of Nantes revoked in 1685, resulting in a great number of Huguenots fleeing from France, many French-speaking Protestants accompanied by a minister, were then recruited by the Dutch East India Company to settle in the Cape observed Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994: 3) and Hofmeyr, Millard and Froneman (1991:25).

### **2.9.2 Foreign missionaries to South Africa**

The first missionary of the Moravians, George Schmidt arrived at the Cape on 9 July 1737 and stayed till 1744 (Hofmeyr and Pillay 1994:24, 40; August 2009:45). Schmidt started to work among the Khoikhoi in the Genadendal region that became a kind of a model of mission work for other missionaries to study before they start with their mission work, comments Boesak (1995:24). The Moravian understanding of missions according to Hofmeyr and Pillay(1994:23,24), was that a settlement was only a means to teach and develop the people, governors encouraged them to continue to establish settlements and they intended to preserve the indigenous culture rather than enforcing the European culture on the indigenous people. When Schmidt baptized his converts, it was the Dutch Reformed Church leaders that concluded that he was founding a new church with the result that they successfully pressed for his removal from the colony (Gerstner 1997:21).

The Dutch East India Company allowed mission organisations and churches to send missionaries to the Cape Colony and by 1803 there were about five hundred members of the South African Missionary Society which was founded on 22 April 1799, carrying on mission work in various villages according to Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:26). Amongst others, were the London Mission Society, the Glasgow Mission Society, The Presbyterians, the Roman Catholics, the Anglican Church Paris Evangelical Mission, the Berlin Mission Society, the Baptist Church and the Rhenish Mission Society, states Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:39-87).

With the formation of the Christian Council of Churches in 1936 Bam (1995:45) states that the Council brought missionary agencies into fellowship with one another, paving the way for

creating the South African Council of Churches in 1968 as an attempt to get a united voice and creating a sense of the members belonging to God and one another. Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:204,205) in drawing some conclusions about the development of the church in South Africa draw our attention to five movements in the church, namely:

1. The missionary bodies rapidly reconstructed themselves into established, locally rooted churches;
2. The black African experience of religious conquest and domination led to the founding of the first independent churches through the Ethiopian movement;
3. The English-speaking churches, influenced directly by political developments in Europe and in Britain in particular, allied themselves increasingly with the liberal causes of the day
4. The Afrikaner Reformed churches ended by retreating more into their own confines, out of which legitimacy for a separatist ideology was established and
5. A growing sense of the global relationship of individual churches gave rise to the ecumenical movement.

### **2.9.3 Racism, the Ecumenical Bodies and the Church in South Africa**

Racism in South Africa did not arrive when the National Party came to power in 1948, but racial discrimination according to De Gruchy (1979:53) and Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:256,251) was entrenched in the Union Constitution and determined much of the legislation passed between 1910 and 1948. The famous decision of the synod in 1857 to exclude non-whites from communion was in view of Botman (1999:127) a decision in favour of church apartheid by the Dutch Reformed Church. One of the most tragic features of South African history as pointed out by Terreblanche (2005:396) is the variety of ways in which whites used the political and economic power at their disposal to deprive indigenous groups of reasonable opportunities for social, economic and entrepreneurial development. The ecumenical church bodies was forced to deal with racial problems while the Dutch Reformed Church clearly did not condemn apartheid as it became clear that they regarded racial separation as scriptural according to De Gruchy (1979:58). In his book, Farewell to Innocence with a similar view in Apartheid is a Heresy Boesak (1977:87; 1983:5) state, 'it is not the Word, but the pseudo-religious ideology of Apartheid which has really become the norm for



the white DRC.’

The World Council of Churches, the body brings together 349 churches, denominations and church fellowships, is the most inclusive among the many organised expressions of the modern day ecumenical movements with its primary goal to promote Christian unity, according to van Wyk (2010:307). The World Council of Churches as well as the South African Council of Churches by understanding their role accepts the role of the church as one of bringing about social justice and justice to the poor so if the present system does not serve this purpose, the public conscience must be aroused to demand another argues Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:259). It would come as no surprise that the system in South Africa that was biblically justified by the DRC caused the Lutheran World Federation to declare apartheid a sin and any justification thereof a heresy that expects that the members thereof to demand an unconditional rejection of apartheid as mentioned by Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:284). The international human rights community decided that apartheid was a crime against humanity as noted by Terreblanche (2005:131). In terms of the racial division that South Africa was well known for, Bosch (1982:31) calls on the DRC community that their credibility as members of the alternative community, the spread of the Gospel and the quality of sisterly love would clearly be at stake if it is not a caring community. The Rustenburg Conference in 1991 where an unusually wide theological spectrum that stretched from Catholic to Calvinist to Charismatic represented by 97 denominations, resulted in the Rustenburg Declaration as attempt to offer solutions for a new South Africa where God’s people can live without any policies that divide them based on the colour of their skin according to Louw and Chikane (1991:13). Villa Vicencio (1992:212) remarks that it was remarkable that a consensus could be reached by this Conference on a range of significant issues. Among others the Declaration included the following; ‘ To the Nation we declare the compelling necessity for all to renounce and turn from personal, economic, social and political sin, most especially the sin of racism in both our souls and structures. We call on Government to repeal as a matter of urgency all apartheid laws. We therefore commit ourselves to the struggle for a just, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa so that our witness may carry greater credibility when we address Church/ State relations in the new dispensation, hence Louw and Chikane 1991:275-286). It was at this Conference according to Louw and Chikane (1991:261) that the DRC minister, Prof. Willie Jonker confessed guilt for participating in apartheid on behalf of his church. What was significant of this confession and later the



declaration was that it was different from the Cottesloe meeting of Churches in 1960 where some Churches supported the Government and its evil policies observes Louw and Chikane (1991:267).

A relevant community for South Africa post apartheid in view of Pityana (1995:99) is one without walls, an inclusive community, that look out to the world with the church creating that space for its members to creatively experiment and live these expressions of community as a sign of the reign of God.

#### **2.9.4 The Church participating in the Struggle against Apartheid in South Africa**

Terreblanche (2005:314) states that the 'purist' conception of apartheid was propagated by cultural organisations such as the Afrikaner Bond, the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs and included was the Dutch Reformed Church. Apartheid was about separateness, about dividing people through legal, social, economic and political measures, thereby according to Smit, denying and destroying any form of unity, sharing, belonging and sharing among South Africans between argues Boesak (1987:6) and Smit (2008:270). Apartheid according to Terreblanche (2005:128) was not just about defending power by denying people rights, but the point of torture, terror and death was even more far-reaching: its aim was to dispossess people of means of livelihood. Apartheid, for August (2009:171), was designed to systematically impoverish the indigenous people and keep the masses in a state of dependency, whilst the European's baasskap (racial and economic supremacy) was entrenched. There can be no doubt, Terreblanche (2005:129) argues, that the apartheid system was deliberately constructed and maintained on behalf of white business and through close and continuous collaboration between almost all white corporations and business organisations on the one hand and the white political bureaucratic establishments on the other. Clearly in view of August (2009:171) the effect of Apartheid on the church and its members was one of demoralising, as members were uprooted, resettled and the church was further burdened with finding new plots suitable and big enough for the requirements of the Church. The challenge for the church suggestively noted by August (2010:19) is to be a strong leader in the fight against social injustice, exploitation, and corruption as well as challenge all types of economic, religious, and political structures that contribute to the suffering of the poor. Apartheid in view of Smit (2008:271) increased forms of social, systematic and structural injustice, whether educational, medical, social or political as well as the violation of human rights eventually resulting in violent resistance and armed struggles.

The crucial important claim for the church in this context according to Smit (2008:271) was to preach unity, reconciliation and compassionate justice. Apartheid therefore needs to be called by its real name: a cancer in the body politic of the world, a shame to the Christian church in South Africa and in its claim to be Christian, a heresy. God is not honoured by the untimely death of children who suffer hunger while the table of the rich are sagging under the weight of surplus food (Boesak 1987:50). For this reason Boesak (1987:54) concur with Ka Munk in that he also believed the church in a context of apartheid in South Africa or any context of oppression and deprivation, need a holy rage when justice lies prostrate on the streets of our nation. Would the lack of economic development be included in the issues that should disturb the church, is one question that might be asked to scholars with similar views like Boesak?

For the church to have gotten involved in the struggle against apartheid was an imperative given the view of Smit (2008:279) that the apartheid system of government because the nature of our belonging to one another as community, the content of our confession and the catholicity of the church was at stake. Through documents like The Kairos Document, The Belhar Confession, The Road to Damascus, Evangelical Witness and Relevant Pentecostal Witness that served as the prophetic voice of the church, the South African church attempted to be true to her prophetic calling according to Louw and Chikane (1991:267). Villa Vicencio (1995:41) suggestively notes that in any political situation the most important political task of the church is simply to tell the truth in making known the actual effects of the policies behind what rulers profess it to be and to expose its consequences for the poor and anticipate its long term effects on society as a whole.

Without the intervention of the church over the years and particularly in the 1990's where violence were rife in South Africa, Villa Vicencio (1995:223) find it difficult to believe that South Africa would have been able to hold its first democratic elections when more than twenty million South African of all races went to the polls for the first non-racial election held on 26 – 29 April 1994.

The policy adopted by the government of separate development, De Gruchy (1979:76) found was not seen as being in contrast with Scripture according to the DRC, but was instituted by them for the survival of the Afrikaner identity. The theological dilemma that De Gruchy had with this approach and position by the DRC would clearly be seen in his quest to understand how the support for the apartheid policies by this church can be morally and theologically

justified in practice. The system that the DRC supports would in view of De Gruchy (1979:78) not only safeguard white interest but would deprive black South Africans of their citizenship as land, resources and economic opportunities but would by no means be equitably allocated or distributed. Following De Gruchy's argument as he challenges the DRC to distance herself from the destructive inhuman system of apartheid, one clearly gets the idea that De Gruchy at that point put in question the prophetic task of the DRC as part of the universal church, as one of warning governments against unjust policies. It is no wonder that Dr. Beyers Naudé, a white minister in the DRC, was banned by the government in October 1977 as he protested against his church and the government for instituting and supporting an unjust system of government (De Gruchy 1979:103). De Gruchy's (1979:236) plea is clear in that in order for the church to be for all the people of the land, it has to rediscover its unity in Christ.

Like Bosch (1982:10), the Lutheran, Kameeta (2007:6) is of the conviction that if the church is called to preach the good news to the poor and to be an advocate for those who are otherwise not heard, then we have to seriously redefine our role in society. Kameeta (2007:7) states: 'We cannot preach the good news from the pulpit, while not being connected, attached and most importantly touched by the every day life and suffering of the people living in poverty'.

The concern that Smit (2008:279) has is the question that the South African Reformed Churches need to face the visibility of the unity of the church and the visible forms of our community as was faced by Calvin and his contemporaries.

## **2.10 The Rhenish Church as a Result of Mission in South Africa**

On 30 June 1829, four missionaries were sent to South Africa as recorded by Apelt (2008:58) and Strassberger (1969:7) after much consultation and prayer. Strassberger (1969:89) states that the mission work done by the Rhenish Mission Society was directly motivated by the commission Christ gave his disciples in Matthew 28:19 and 20. One of the aims of the Rhenish Mission Society (R.M.S.) was to improve the financial, educational, social and economic situation of the people as the extension of the Kingdom of God (Strassberger (1969:89).

The Dutch language of the colonists as well as the fact that the government of the Colony was protestant and recognised protestant foreign missionary societies was according to

Strassberger (1969:9) favourable for the Rhenish Mission Society. On 7 October 1829 the first four missionaries trained by the Rhenish Mission Society arrived in Cape Town and was received by Dr. Philip, the Director of the London Mission Society (Strassberger 1969:9,10). These first four missionaries were Leipoldt, Zahn, Lückhoff, Von Wurm and his wife (Strassberger 1969:9). It was eventually amongst the coloureds in view of Strassberger (1969:20, 91) that the Rhenish mission started to work.

The Rhenish Mission Society introduced a system for training of missionaries that involved a two-year preparatory course and four year of actual seminary training (Apelt 2008:65,66). Mission students had to learn a profession or trade before enrolling at the mission school (Apelt 2008:65, 66). Bilbe (2009:73) observed that seminary training included three days a week of theory and two days of artisan training. Bilbe (2009:73) furthermore observed that many of the first recruits to the mission school came from the artisan class.

In South Africa, according to Bilbe (2009:74) the imparting of artisan skills by the Rhenish Missionaries was seen as possibly one of the greatest contributions to the economic development of the Khoisan in the Cape Colony. At one of the mission station, Wupperthal, Leipoldt used the Moravian model of fostering industry and enterprise in order to transform the community of ex-slave households in particular by capitalising on the opportunities of economic development that was afforded to inhabitants after 1840 ( Bilbe 2009:105 and Strassberger 1969:12). After the visit on 24 October 1829 by the first missionaries to Groenekloof to observe the activities of the Moravian Brothers Leipoldt decided to adapt the practices as soon as he would establish a mission station according to Bilbe (2009:76). Leipoldt made the following observation about Groenklook: “Each of the three brothers has their respective task. One oversees the Spiritual, the other the gardens and fields, and the third has control over the industry. The school teaching and church service are shared. Their wives work among the women.” The Rhenish church on the Wupperthal mission station already ten years after Leipoldt established the church provided the people with houses, got the community to learn useful trades such as carpenters, hat makers, shoemakers and gardeners (Bilbe 2009:106). A tannery and a mill were erected and successful animal husbandry practices ensured good numbers of stock and profit was put into the Mission coffers to be used for the expansion and development records (Bilbe 2009:110). In Tulbagh where Zahn worked, he started a poverty fund for slaves where every member had to contribute on a weekly basis noted Strassberger (1969:23). Members had to attend church and school

diligently according to Strassberger (1969:23). As recorded by Strassberger (1969:27), while the Gospel was preached over the first ten years on the Rhenish mission stations, people's social and economic standards were being improved by 1840.

The intention of the founders of the Rhenish Mission shows clear signs that the mission would include as part of preaching the Gospel, the development of the people. It seems to be the case that an economic developmental role was seen as part of the task of the mission. At Wupperthal, where Johann Leipoldt started his mission work in 1830, every family joining the mission station was given a garden plot to cultivate (Strassberger 1969:46). Strassberger (1969:20,45) reports after reading the diaries of missionaries and reports which they regularly sent to Barmen in Germany, that not only did they described the developing faith of the heathen, but also elaborated on their moral, social and cultural development which proved of great value to South Africa. The Rhenish missionaries at the Cape regarded the educational work as secondary only to evangelization as five schools with 1225 pupils and twenty-eight teachers in Stellenbosch and vicinity bear witness according to Strassberger (1969:38). However, Strassberger (1969:91) is concerned that after 110 years of mission work by the R.M.S. only two coloured ministers were ordained, namely Frederik Hein and Gideon Thomas.

One needs to ask if this way of being church was introduced consistently wherever the Rhenish Mission Society founded mission station. Since the beginning of Rhenish mission one might also ask what impact did droughts in the rural areas, epidemics and the national political position of the coloured, amongst which they primarily worked, had on the religious and economic development of the people. The Rhenish Church in addressing the economic development of its people should indicate over the 180 years of its existence what kind of actions did they take in terms of engaging with government on matters ecclesiastical, legislative, judiciary, moral, land and property, human rights economic, educational and the challenges that colonisation and imperialism imposed on the peoples they served.

The question today is, did the Rhenish Church managed to deal with empowering of the people, being the voice of the oppressed in the indigenous political aspirations of its members with regard to property rights and economic opportunities? The concern today might be that the Rhenish Church never managed to balance its ministry in terms of the spiritual formation and the economic development of a people believing in a God that called them to be His church.

## **2.11 Conclusion**

This chapter clearly demonstrated that theologians view the church as a valued contributor to the wellbeing of any community with biblical examples of what Christ Jesus' call has intended the "called people" to be and to do. There are obviously much more views of what is understood as the role of the church, but the views mentioned in this chapter kind of constitute a valid argument for this thesis to reason that scholars clearly would imply by there interpretation of the role of the church, that included should be that of economic development of the community it find itself in. Where the church lacks its institutional strength to take its place in society, James (1992:82) argues that this will lead to the lack of credibility and the ability to function effectively as a mediating institution. The church then must work diligently and dedicatedly on the religious life of its members, in order to send them not as career-Christians into the world, but as Christians into their various careers (Heyns 1980:97).

The next chapter will deal with the question as to what economic development is, the objectives of development and how the church relates to economic development.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1 Introduction

The study of economic development is one of the newest and most challenging branches of the broader disciplines of economics (Todaro and Smith 2006:8). Economic development for Todaro and Smith (2006:9), is the economics of contemporary poor, underdeveloped nations with varying ideological orientations, diverse cultural backgrounds and very complex yet similar economic problems that usually demand new ideas and novel approaches.

The intent of this chapter is to reflect critically on what scholars view to be the meaning and implications of the terms, development and economic development. The intention is therefore to provide a broad overview of these concepts based on the body of literature consulted, in the hope that it will produce a comprehensive work that will be helpful to the researcher in his quest to establish whether economic development can be attributed to as one of the church's roles. By drawing on recent literature in the development field this chapter attempts to discover if there is a critical religious engagement of the church in the economic development sphere.

#### 3.2 Defining Development

The founding moment of development studies for Bernstein (2005:113) was one of world-historical drama when questions were asked that sought to identify and explain key processes of change in the formation of the modern world and the effects of these processes. Among such effects according to Bernstein (2005:113) was the striking unevenness of forms and rates of economic growth in different regions and countries at different times, together with social, political and cultural forces associated with them. In the formative years of development studies there was an assumption, according to Bernstein (2005:114) that the state in newly independent countries had a central role in planning and managing economic and social development. The question then is what is meant by development?

The concept of development since its emergence in the 1950s and early 1960s, has developed to a modern theory around the end of World War II, a time according to Tsele (2001:205)

when many war-torn countries were reconstructing themselves. It is this long history of formulation of the term, development that has allowed the concept to attain a global scale in contemporary times.

According to Simon (1997:184), development is the process of enhancing individual and collective quality of life in a manner that satisfies basic needs (as a minimum), is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and is empowering in the sense that the people concerned have a substantial degree of control (because total control may be unrealistic) over the process through access to the means of accumulating social power. The view that Sen (1999:3) holds on development is that development as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy, enhances the lives they lead. Nelson (1980:162) argues that development necessarily involves critical choices. Slow human development according to Soubbotina (2004:8) can put an end to fast economic growth, which seems to be the goal of development.

In strictly economic terms, development has traditionally meant the capacity of a national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national income at rates of 5% to 7% or more ( Todaro and Smith 2006:15).

Development can also be seen as an idea, an objective and an activity with not just one idea or theory of development but a plurality of ideas and theories (Kothari and Minogue 2002:12). Oxfam, a poverty-focused British Non-Governmental Organization that works in over 70 countries around the world, believe that at the heart of development is the fact that all people have the right to an equitable share in the world's resources which mean they should be the authors of their own development (Eade 1997:2). This view would be in line with the view by the United Nations as stated by Dias (Ecumenical Review 1995:345), that development must be people-centered where the human person is the central subject of development and the beneficiary of the right to development. The denial of such rights is at the heart of poverty, suffering and underdevelopment, according to Eade (1997:3). The UN Declaration on the Right to Development adopted in 1986 at the United Nations General Assembly stresses that development is "an inalienable human right", according to (Dias 1995:345 and Sengupta 2000:543). This human right according to Sengupta (2000:543), as understood by President Roosevelt, includes economic rights such as food, clothing, housing, health, education and employment. The recognition of the Right to Development as an



inalienable human right according to Sengupta (2000:543) confers on its implementation a claim on national and international resources, and obliges the states and other agencies of society to implement that right. One of the benefits of using a human rights approach to development (Sengupta 2000:561), is that it focuses attention on those who lag behind others in enjoying their rights and would therefore require that positive action be taken on their behalf. Development must lead to capacity building as a long-term investment in people and a commitment to the various processes through which they can better shape the forces that affect people's lives (Eade 1997:31). Burkey (2000:48) purports that development involves changes in the awareness, motivation and behavior of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups and society that is not imposed on them. Burkey (2000:31) also speaks of the theory of 'Another Development' which states that development should be *need-oriented*, geared to meet both material and non-material needs based on structural transformation within that given society.

Rahman (1993:217) sees development as an organic process of healthy growth that may be stimulated by external elements, but any attempt to force it towards external standards can result in maiming it. A key focus for Mohamed-Katerere (1997:145) of development is the promotion of better living standards, opportunities and choices and the creation of the social and political conditions that make human life productive. Dias (1995:345) emphasises that all human rights guaranteed by UN instruments (economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political) must be respected in the process of development.

The modernization of development theory can be concluded by Rostow who identified five stages or levels of economic growth or development as stated by Preston (2002:175) and Tsele (in Belshaw, Calderisi and Sugden 2001:205).

The five stages or levels are:

1. Traditional society: low technological knowledge
2. Developing stage: agricultural productivity increases
3. Take-off: industrialization takes place
4. Maturity: modern technology takes root
5. Mass consumption society: the ultimate goal

Rostow's model of the modernisation theory has some important implications and

assumptions as stated by Swanepoel and De Beer (1997:19, 20):

- It assumes that all societies evolve from a common starting point of underdevelopment and transform along a reductionist continuum of economic and social change from traditional to modern.
- Progress is mainly regarded as economic growth. Economic growth and development are often regarded as similar.
- Development is often seen as a process that can be controlled; certain inputs will provide certain outputs.
- At some stage in the development process a spread effect will take place and development impulses from the developed areas will flow to the less developed and undeveloped areas.

According to Graaff (2001:6) development theory started as two opposed macro streams; structural-functionalism set against Marxism; and modernization theory set against imperialism and dependency theory. He further more states that this move has been followed by a third stream, a set of new theoretical stratagems by which macro-perspectives and micro-perspectives could be stitched together (Graaff 2001:6).

The idea of development is necessarily Euro centric because it was in Europe that development was meant to bring transformation and to construct order out of social disorder of rapid urban migration, poverty and unemployment (Cowen and Shenton 1996:5). Cowen and Shenton (1996:7) refers to Thomas when trying to define development and mentions that Thomas refers to two meanings of development as:

- 1) An *historical process of social change* in which societies are transformed over long periods; and
- 2) As consisting of *deliberate efforts aimed at progress* on the part of various agencies, including governments, all kinds of organizations and social movements.

Development is about people, their needs and their circumstances and must therefore according to Swanepoel (2001:71, 73) be about total life transformation.

### 3.3 Development Goals

Development appears to be both means and goal where the goal would be most often unwittingly assumed to be present at the onset of the process of development itself (Cowen and Shenton 1996:4). For Koegelenberg (1992:2), the history of the concept development is closely associated with Western ideas on modernisation, technological advancement and liberal and free market economic ideologies. The Right to Development as declared by the United Nations in 1986 is seen as a process in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized with the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and the fair distribution of the benefits for all who participate in development (Sengupta 2000:563). The claim of virtually all major aid donors is that the principle objective of their development interventions is to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for all, meaning that the intended outcome of development should lead to economic growth and social development (Kothari and Minogue 2002:181). This implied result of development in the Third World, Burkey (1993:27) mentions, was expected to be an imitative process in which the less developed countries gradually assumed the qualities of industrialised First World nations.

The idiom of development contained the deliberate *intention* of resolving immediate and pressing problems of poverty left unresolved like unemployment and the threat of economic decline that people find themselves in (Cowen and Shenton 1996:439). This is the reason Soubbotina( 2004:123,124) reminds us that the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 issued the famous Agenda 21 which in its 40 chapters provided the main framework for international understanding of cooperation for combating poverty as a basic condition for ensuring sustainability.

In social and economic terms Todaro (1989:89) and Burkey (2000:27) understand the goal of development to mean the sustained elevation of an entire society towards a more humane life and essentially increasing gross levels of savings and investments until a point of self sustaining. Towards this end Todaro (1989:89) has three core values that serve as practical guidelines for understanding development, namely:

- 1) *life-sustenance - the ability to provide basic needed,*
- 2) *Self-esteem – to be a person and*

### 3) *Freedom – to be able to choose.*

These core values of development according to Todaro (1989:89) relate to fundamental human needs that find their expression in almost all societies and cultures at all times.

Development, argues Cowen and Shenton (1996:8, 10), is the means towards progress and serves as the counterpoint to corruption. Development therefore according to Cowen and Shenton (1996:5), may be regarded as the means whereby the goal of universal human improvement can be attained.

Essentially the goal of development, according to Todaro and Smith (2006:17), is to represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and desires of individuals and social groups within that system, moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better. In view of Kothari and Minogue (2002:13), development is the product of collaboration and interaction between state, market and community or civil society.

## 3.4 **The Objectives of Development**

Development exists where people act as subjects and are not acted upon as objects, targets and ‘beneficiaries’, nor manipulated as ‘participants’ in designs and projects not for their own ‘participation’ (Raff 1996:2). In attempting to answer the question on what the objectives of development are, Cowen and Shenton (1996:439) comes to the conclusion that the objective of development is a *process of improvement* with development economics being concerned with *rapid and large-scale improvements in levels of living* for the masses of poverty-stricken, malnourished and illiterate people. This view of Cowen and Shenton as mentioned above links on with Black’s (1997:122) view, that states that economic development’s main objective is to devote attention to aspects of the economy including the institutional framework, provision of infrastructure such as power and transport facilities, and problems of population and agriculture, which in advanced economics often be taken for granted. The assumption seems to be, based on the definitions given by scholars like Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:23) that by implementing specific plans or programmes, it is possible to introduce factors that will move a society along on the development path to a favourable change and human well-being. With reference to the Report of the South Commission,

produced under the chairmanship of the former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, Rist (2010:8) discovered that an objective of development as seen by this commission was seen as a process which frees people from the fear of want and exploitation, away from political and economic or social oppression.

Sen (1999:3,14) is of the view that development requires the objective to remove poverty and tyranny, poor economic opportunities and systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as a repressive state. Economic poverty and the lack of economic development, in view of Sen (1999:4, 8, 16), relates directly to the reasons why people cannot satisfy their hunger, achieve sufficient nutrition, not having adequate clothing or to enjoy clean water and sanitary facilities as well as becoming a helpless prey in the violation of other kinds of freedom. The argument of Sen (1995:5) implies that what people can positively achieve, is influenced by economic opportunities, the enabling conditions of good health, basic education and the cultivation of initiatives. Cowen and Shenton (1996:4) recalls Stuaadt's view that the goal and objective of development is to enlarge choices with the knowledge and capacity to make the necessary choices. If any of these components is regarded as missing then it is that gap which development is invoked to bridge (Cowen and Shenton 1996:4).

In essence Todaro (1989:88), states that the objective of development would be to represent the whole range of changes by which an entire social system moves away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a situation or condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually "better". The understanding of Todaro and Smith (2006:17) is that development need to be a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, attitudes, national institutions, the reduction of inequality as well as the acceleration of economic growth and most probably how the church engage in the economic development battle. It is thus perceived that development is a process of sometimes wrenching social change, argues Cypher and Dietz (2003:27).

According to Davids et al (2005:24) the objective of development should be woven around people, their diverse needs, changing circumstances, customs, values and knowledge systems. This implies that development intend to eradicate poverty, discrimination and environmental degradation through fostering just relationships in and between poor and non-poor societies on a global scale (Davids, Theron and Maphunye 2005: 24). These scholars advocate that if we want to speak about 'development', we need to know that *development is about people*

and the specific context of the intended beneficiaries of development (Davids, Theron and Maphunye 2005: 24). Development must therefore begin by identifying human needs and the need to relate to people's meaning-giving living context according to Davids *et al* (2005: 23, 24). Furthermore Davids *et al* (2005:23) argues that development is a universal issue that includes urbanization, pollution, environmental degradation, HIV and Aids, unfair trading practices and economic expansionism in the Third World as well as in the First World.

One would be able to deduce from the views of Cypher and Dietz (2003:15) that an objective of development would fundamentally be about regime change and the search for an optimal growth path, or at least one that is superior to the existing one, accompanied by the changing institutional patterns.

Todaro (1989:90, 91), in terms of developmental objectives, advocates that development in all societies must have at least the following three objectives:

1. To increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection;
2. To raise levels of living including, in addition to higher incomes, the provision of more jobs, better education, and greater attention to cultural and humanistic values, all of which will serve not only to enhance material well-being but also to generate greater individual and national esteem;
3. To expand the range of economic and social choices available to individuals and nations by freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation-states but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery.

When critically looking at the role of the church in economic development and the views of scholars with regard to their understanding of the objectives of development, one clearly need to ask the church if she see herself as one of the role players that can contribute in achieving these objectives of development mentioned by these scholars. Literature must tell if the church has been identified as an active role player in economic development.

### **3.5 Measurements for Development**

Measuring development is not simply a measure of income, but also of quality of life, knowledge and standard of living according to Serote, Mager and Budlender (2001: 157). The productivity with which countries use their productive resources – physical capital, human

capital and natural capital – is widely recognised as the main indicator of their level of economic development (Soubbotina 2004:12). Tsele (2001: 207) states that we need to measure development by its ability to sustain healthy and dignified standards of living without excessive destruction or abuse of people and ecosystems.

**Gross National Product** is used to measure the capacity of a national economy (Todaro (1989:86 and Serote *et al* 2001: 157). The difficulty by using the gross national product as a measure of development are its failure to include non-marketed subsistence production, including much homemakers' work , unpaid labour performed mainly by women and welfare and income distribution considerations (Todaro 1989:108 ; Serote *et al* 2001: 157 and Soubbotina 2004:12,110).

Todaro (1989:228) suggest that policies is necessary and crucial in the transition from a high-growth to a low-growth population if it aims to eliminate absolute poverty, lessen income inequalities, expand education opportunities for both men and women. This will also be the case for bringing the benefits of modern preventive medicine and public health programs to the rural and urban poor, improving maternal and child health through more food, better diets and improved nutrition so as to lower infant mortality, and creating a more equitable provision of other social services to wide segments of the population (Todaro 1989:228).

In developing nations, general levels of living tend to be very low for the vast majority of people with the result one would find inadequate housing, poor health, and limited education and, in many cases, a general sense of hopelessness (Todaro 1989:27). One can imagine that the successful pursuit of development will require not only the formulation of appropriate strategies, but also a modification of the present international economic order to make it responsive to the development needs of poor nations. The unpaid labour, for instance, is critical to the functioning of the entire economic and social system argues Serote, Mager and Budlender (2001:158), as the exclusion from the GDP means that the GDP does not measure production accurately and is less able to measure well-being.

Development strategies have usually focused on rapid industrialization, often at the expense of agriculture and rural development. Furthermore Todaro (1989:87), is further of the view that development was nearly always seen as an economic phenomenon, in which rapid gains in overall per capita GNP growth would either “trickle down” to the masses in the form of jobs and distribution of the economic and social benefits of growth. Development and more



employment mean more income for the poor, which in turn implies a greater demand for locally produced basic consumption goods (Todaro 1989:256).

We are cautioned by Todaro (1989:276) when it comes to development and rural-urban migration in that he points out that its significance lies in its implications for economic growth in general and its distributional manifestations as migration is clearly a symptom of and a contributor to Third World underdevelopment. It is beyond doubt that Todaro (1989:276) believes that migrants compromise a significant proportion of the urban labour force in many developing nations.

The rejection by, or the inability of people to participate in the labour market, according to Sen (1999:7), is one of the ways of keeping people in bondage and captivity. The right, the freedom and the opportunity to enter the economy can be in itself, according to Sen (1999:7), a significant contribution to development. Sen (1999:8) further argues that economic restrictions can breed social restrictions, just as social or political restrictions can also foster economic restrictions. The state and society have extensive roles to play in strengthening and safeguarding human capabilities (Sen 1999:53). While the state and society has this role, Sen (1999:53) notes that the people cannot be passive recipients of fruits of cunning development programs, but they need the opportunity to be actively involved as this will contribute to the shaping of their own destiny. The need for policy initiatives in creating opportunities is crucially important as this will make it possible for more people to participate directly in the process of economic expansion (Sen 1999:143).

Gilbert and Gugler (1999:177) is of the opinion that a wide gap in income and wealth, power and status separates the élite from the mass of the population in most Third World countries and the majority of the urban population has a standard of living so low that it is inconceivable to the average citizen of an industrialized country. For millions of people living in these poor conditions, the quest for food, for themselves and for their children, is a daily struggle for survival while many secure the help of kin, neighbours and friends (Gilbert and Gugler 1995:177). It is interesting to note with Gilbert and Gugler (1995:58) that a new international structure is emerging that is modifying links between developed and less developed countries. Global interdependence and integrating national economies with a global production system is at the order of the day. According to Gilbert and Gugler (1995:58), a key feature of this stage of development are the growth of manufacturing production in certain parts of the Third World for export to markets in developed countries.



This development has led to a large increase of imported manufactured products entering the developed countries. The question that Gilbert and Gugler (1995:59) rightly ask is how these changes affect development and then specifically urban development.

### **3.6 Dimensions of Development**

There are numerous current approaches to development. A brief description of the dimensions of the development theories is given below as we examine what is meant by development as transformation, human development, women and development, development as social development, development as political development and development as liberation. On the basis of exploring literature on these dimensions of development it is hoped that this review will guide this study towards establishing scholars' views with regard to the role of the church in economic development.

#### **3.6.1 Development as Transformation**

Transformation according to Braggs (1987:39) is to take what is and turn it into what it could and should be. Based on this view of transformation, Braggs (1987:40) concludes that transformation seeks to repel the evil social structures, violence, economic subjugation and the devastation that exist in the present reality. Development has always been involved in changes or transformations of structures and in view of Burkey (1993:35), development must therefore be seen as a process evolving gradually over time. Soubbotina (2004:123) sees development as also the qualitative transformation of a whole society, a shift to new ways of thinking and corresponding to new relations and new methods of production. In theorizing about development Tsele (2001:203) states that over the years there have been a significant shift from a primary economic growth model to one that takes into account several factors that seeks to achieve a more human society and a greater equality in the distribution and sharing of resources. The normative or even intrinsically moral nature of development, Mouton (1992:57) mentions, is reflected in the variety of synonyms that is usually associated with the notion of development – growth, advancement, improvement or even progress. This is part of the reason why Burkey (1993:27) makes the observation that development and economic growth became synonymous with progress and higher levels of civilisation or then transformation.

In reading Koopman (2008:33), development can also be viewed as a restoration of dignity, while Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:18, 31) argues that development is about

transforming circumstances of people. Human beings are multidimensional with the psychological need for dignity, self-esteem, freedom and participation (Braggs 1987:24, 42). According to Koegelenberg (1992: 2) and Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:18, 23), development is essentially about people and not primarily about statistics, about increasing gross national products, about technological innovations or bureaucratic blueprints. Mouton (1992:57) on the other hand refers to Peter Berger's view in trying to define development when he mentions that Berger sees development as a vision of transformation and salvation, equal to improving human condition. People-centred development was believed to achieve this goal, mentioned by Mouton, and by so doing it should provide a starting point in addressing the injustices in societies where there is an unequal distribution of wealth.

One of the implications of defining development as people-centred according to Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:23), is that development can therefore not only be a Third World issue but must inevitable be seen as a universal issue. At a conference organised by the Institute for Theological and Interdisciplinary Research held in 1992, James (1992:67) stated that development is a process by which members of society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their aspirations. The process of development should then create an environment conducive for people to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive lives in accordance with their needs and interests ( Koegelenberg 1992:89). Development for Braggs (1987:47) must become transformation.

The obvious question for this research is to ask if the church would be viewed as one of the transforming agencies and what role would the church play.

### **3.6.2 Development as Human Development**

The UN Development Program according to Nafziger (2006:35) defines human development as a process of enlarging people's choices in order that they may enjoy a decent standard of living. In many ways Todaro's (1989:90, 91) view of development is in agreement with Taylor (1990:38) in that he also states that development is not primarily a matter of raising living standards but it is a matter of human development and by so doing it is a matter of fulfilling God's intentions for us as human beings, with those intentions being material as

well as spiritual. Human development involves the strengthening of the personality and that is why Burkey (2000:51, 52) is of the opinion that no development activity can hope to succeed unless it contains a strong element of human development. Rist (2010; 9) reminds us of the Human Development Report of 1991, published by the United Nations Development Programme that states; “the basic objective of human development is to enlarge the range of people’s choices to make development more democratic and participatory, These choices should include access to income and employment opportunities, education and health, and a clean and safe physical environment’.

Meaningful development must begin with and within the individual so that in the process the individual according to Burkey (2000:35), can become more self-confident, self-reliant and able to realise his or her potential for positive change. According to Max-Neef, Elizalde and Hopenhayn (1991:16) the best development process will be that which allows the greatest improvement in people's quality of life that adequately satisfies the fundamental human need. This is why Taylor (1990:40) argues that matters of faith cannot be kept out of the discussion and practice of development.

### **3.6.3 Women and Development**

Kothari (2002:41) draws our attention to the effect development had on women with regards to the marginalisation of women since development was primarily concerned with economic growth. Exclusion of women to this process was seemingly justified since women were not seen as economic actors and therefore not to be considered within the framework of what constituted development (Kothari 2002:41). Abuom (2001:115) observes that poverty among women is growing faster in Sub-Saharan Africa than in any other developing region.

Women generally and specifically in Africa, as a group, according to Abuom ( 2001:115) and Burkey (2000:53) are less educated, earn less, restricted in their freedom and range of choice, control less and are less well represented in most economic and political spheres than women elsewhere and would therefore suffer more during the implementation of economic recovery programs. This view is supported by Serote, Magger and Budlender (2001:156) when they argue that there are many environments in which women are subsumed within patriarchal controls and have no independent access to resources such as land or housing. In apartheid South Africa, Wilson and Ramphela (1989:158) observed that it was women who suffered the heaviest burdens of uncertainty and fear under the risk of family breakdown and lack of

income under the migratory labour system. So if development strategies are to make a difference to individual lives, and to women's lives in particular, they need to take into account the ways in which power relations are gendered argues Serote, Magger and Budlender (2001:157). A crisis in the Third World in terms of increasing levels of poverty, exclusion and inequality suggests that development planning has failed to reduce these inequalities as well as failing to bring the intended benefits to much of the world's population which is the women (Kothari and Minogue 2002:3,6). This point is clearly demonstrated, for example, by the relationship between Britain and its former colonies after independence as the colonial relations clearly influences the postcolonial period politically, economically, culturally and especially with reference to economic opportunities for women (Kothari 2002:36,37). The South African context was known for the barriers against women, restricting them to move freely into the market-place to work where they choose, combined with the educational disadvantages that weighed more heavily on women than on men (Wilson and Ramphele 1989:79).

The value of girls and women to both their families and the larger society in an African context in view of Abuom (2001:127) must be expanded beyond their definition as potential child bearers and caretakers to active role players and participants in the economic development of the societies in which they live. Legislation should be enacted to remove any obstacles to women's effective rights to land for income generation purposes, as women's rights to land are put at risk by widowhood or divorce and lack hereof jeopardizes women's income and economic well-being (Abuom 2001:127). The lack of legislative protection and of labour organisation is according to Wilson and Ramphele (1989:179), partly to blame for the state of affairs where women suffered exploitation and exclusion in economic development. The exposure of women's exploitation by multinationals encouraged the formation of trade unions as a key site of struggle for women's empowerment (Serote, Magger and Budlender 2001:160).

That the post apartheid government in South Africa took the emancipation of women seriously, was and is still of paramount importance for the economic development of the whole country and part of this challenge is changing the attitudes of men and construct new identities based on gender sensitive meanings and uses of power (Serote, Magger and Budlender 2001:172).

### **3.6.4 Development as Social Development**

Burkey (2000:37) defines social development as development that refers to those investments and services, such as health services and facilities, education, transport systems, water supplies and communications, provided or carried out by a community for the mutual benefit of the people of that community. Primary health care services, according to Amoa (2001:149,150), should be provided by governments and should consist of curative services at health centres, outreach services to rural communities, referrals to district hospitals and special programs aimed at the poor and vulnerable. According to Sengupta (2000:564) the states have a duty, individually and collectively, to formulate international development policies to facilitate the realization of the Right to Development. It is clear that these social development services can hardly be provided and sustained adequately by most communities unless you have management and accountability systems as well as political development in place to insure effective operation (Burkey 2000:37). Spending on education and health builds human capital that can contribute both to economic growth and to the alleviation of poverty in the long term (Amoa 2001:147).

Social development according to Burkey (2000:37) is inevitably dependent on economic development to provide the resource base from which investment capital and operating funds are allocated because no social development activity is without cost.

### **3.6.5 Development as Political Development**

The political structure must be truly responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people but must at the same time, according to Burkey (2000:37) protect the rights and property of the people it serves. Burkey (2000:37) concur with the definition given by a group of Ugandan development workers who purports that:

Political development is a process of gradual change over time in which the people increase their awareness of their own capabilities, their rights and their responsibilities; and use this knowledge to organise themselves so as to acquire real political power in order (1) to participate in decision-making at local level and to choose their own leaders and representatives at higher levels of government who are accountable to the people; (2) to plan and share power democratically; and (3) to create and allocate communal resources equitably ( fairly) and efficiently among individual groups. Hence it may be possible to avoid corruption and exploitation,

realise social and economic development, political stability and peace, and create a politicised population within the context of their own culture and their own political system.

Politicians commonly assume that the benefits of the system will trickle down the benefits of development to the poorest of the poor but this in view of Braggs (1987:24) as the poor can be worst of.

### **3.6.6 Development as Liberation**

The term development has become a word that gave expression to the aspirations of the poor if development attacks the root causes of the problems of the poor people (Gutierrez 1986:24). As described by Gutierrez (1986:26) development should lead to liberation, the inescapable moment of radical change that, in his view, is foreign to the ordinary use of the term *development*. With the struggle of the poor in Latin America, Gutierrez (1986:114) finds the role of the Church as one of assisting with development or in his view liberation. Terreblanche (2005:57) is of the view that the South African economic system in the apartheid years was deliberately moulded on the basis of unfree black labour, the systematic exploitation of blacks and the marginalisation of the majority of blacks as an impoverished proletariat without property, proper employment opportunities and social support systems. This would be enough reason to ask for a liberating development of the economic system as large proportions of economic power and property was concentrated in the hands of fewer than ten mega-corporations or conglomerates according to Terreblanche (2005:57). In view of Burkey (2000:48) development should be more than the provision of social services and the introduction of new technologies, as he believes that development should have a liberating effect on the behaviour of people, relations between individuals as well as between groups within a society.

Raff (1996:206) further argues that development starts in people's minds, in their attitudes, value systems and judgments to the point where he believes that people can only develop them. The intention and purpose of development according to Raff (1996:210) should be to indicate growth and invoke ownership, control, and freedom and satisfy human need.

Davids, Theron and Maphunye (2005:43, 51, 88) noted that the Retribution and Development Program Base Document of the African National Congress of 1994 has its focus on the liberation of the people with its developmental programs that included the following:

- Empower people so that they could become self-reliant in the long run
- Build local capacity through development support
- Initiate development programs and projects on a participatory basis
- Address the injustices of the past caused by both colonialism and apartheid

Trade Unions claim to have as its vision the serving of the interest of society and advancing human development by fighting for the liberation and well being of societal, political, social and industrial democracy, human rights for all, the elimination of mass poverty, equality and the Rule of Law.

In South Africa, prior to 1994, an enormous amount of NGO's emerged with a view to help liberate the oppressed and right a wrong, particularly at micro- or grassroots level, either through compassion or protest, observe Davids, Theron and Maphunye( 2005: 73).

The question that the researcher again needs to ask is if the church is included as a role player that needs to address these issues and if economic development is included in this list of the authors.

### **3.7 Potential Barriers to Development**

Soubbotina (2004:8) warns us that the objective to create economic growth through development was at times achieved at the cost of greater inequality, higher unemployment, weakened democracy, and loss of cultural identity or even over consumption of natural resources needed by future generations. Resource constraints and bad economic policies affect different countries differently and must be seen as a major barrier (Sengupta 2000:561 and Gillis, Perkins Roemer and Snodgrass 1996:26). Many scholars would be in agreement that development does have good intentions, but there can be a tremendous amount of barriers that can hinder, prohibit or even sidetrack any good intentions. The view of Cypher and Dietz (2003:18, 19) serve as a summary of the views of scholars to a number of barriers to development as they mention the following:

1. Inequalities in the existing distributions of income and wealth including the distribution of land ownership as wealth distribution is intimately related to the nature and power of class relations in society and control over economic resources;
2. The level and efficiency of infrastructure development that includes roads, electricity,

- water, communication services and so on;
3. The role of and level of development of organized banking and lending activities;
  4. An ineffective or underdeveloped educational system as well as low levels of literacy and an imbalance between allocations of financing to lower and higher education;
  5. The influence of religious thinking and the accepted role of women and ethnic religious minorities;
  6. The power and nature of the influence of government, including the degree of political freedom and the strength of democratic processes;
  7. The extend of corruption;
  8. Multinational corporations;
  9. The influence of the geopolitical and strategic interest of larger economic powers vis-à-vis smaller and weaker economic entities;
  10. The economic policies of more developed nations on the global economic system.

A strong argument of Taylor (1990:24) is the assumption that over the past forty years development has been generally assumed to be a good thing for the poor as development meant reproducing in the Third World the kind of industrial revolution which eventually brought about material progress in countries like the United Kingdom, that has allowed most of its people to enjoy higher standards of living. Simon (2007:184) is of the view that trends in basic needs and quality of life in assessing the shortcomings or failures of development initiatives, downplay or ignore the compelling evidence from around the globe that the dominant aspirations of poor people and their governments remain concerned (albeit for structurally different reasons) with meeting basic needs, enhancing their living standards and emulating advanced industrial countries in some variant of classic modernization strategies.

The shared concern of many scholars is found in Taylor's (1990:25, 26) argument against the assumption that development was generally good as formulated in the five issues he raises concerning development:

- a. Even if development as industrialization brings a greater measure of prosperity and lifts hungry people well above the breadline, it has not in many other respects led to a better quality of life. Seeing that development has really led to a better quality of life, can it be justified unless it does?
- b. Secondly Taylor brings under our attention that there is growing disparities



between employers and employed. Those who did the work did not reap the benefits as those with power in the factories and market places grew rich while the vast majority remained poor. Can one then still say development is good for the poor?

- c. Thirdly, development has been accused of prejudice against the rural areas in favour of the towns. Towns were regarded as of first importance that led to a situation where the needs of rural areas for roads, communication, goods and services and investments are neglected that increased the poverty levels. What has development significantly done for the rural areas?
- d. Would it be fair to see development as unjust and exploitative? When wealthy industrialized nations provide aid, it is not actually the poorer countries that benefit, but they themselves as this development can be seen as a form of investment. Much of the surplus is transferred out of the country in the form of profits, interest or cheap goods for Western consumers.
- e. Finally, development has been challenged as not only unfair but ineffective in the sense that it has simply not solved the basic problem as there remained an appalling degree of poverty and the benefits of the industrialized development has been enjoyed by a few.

### **3.8 The Development Agenda**

The development agenda, according to the view of scholars as mentioned, seems clearly to be about economic growth and human development. The development agenda has opened an avenue for dialogue amongst scholars in the development studies field that might bring us to understand whether economic development is seen as part of the role of the church.

Development studies, poverty and inequality are linked to one another argues Graaff (2003:6). This is why the development agenda for Kothari and Minogue (2002:2) and Saul (2006:32) is very much a practical agenda with issues such as economic growth, poverty reduction, the reform of trade between regimes, the reduction of international debt of Third World countries, decentralization and social development. Based on the above, Burkey (1993:35) argues that on the development agenda will always find the question as to who controls the physical, financial and human resources and how decisions are made that will affect the use of these resources.

Swart (2003:33) therefore argue that the development agenda cannot be restricted to the problems of economics, technological and scientific development as its complexities extends beyond the problems of economics because it embraces all spheres of life. However, the central question to ask in development studies to ask, is how some people's wealth is connected to other people's poverty as well as whose fault is it (Graaff 2003:1).

The intention now is to explore in more depth the weight of economic development within the debate of development.

### **3.9 The Economic Development Debate**

Most of the deaths in less developed countries are brought on by extreme poverty and deprivation and famine.

In our modern and affluent times this need not occur or at least need not occur due to any lack of human knowledge about how to prevent them, as the means to prevent this senseless waste of human life is at hand according to Cypher and Dietz (2003:4). Steytler (1997:1) draws our attention to the fact that there must be a link between economic development, democracy and human rights and that is why he argues that economic development needs to be sensitive to the rights of every human being. Cypher and Dietz (2003:6), **argue** that the existence of world poverty does not appear to be because of a fundamental shortfall in aggregate productive capacity, given the modest size of the poverty gap in most regions, but ending poverty is a challenge of political will and the challenge of economic structures.

**A view that Clark (2002:10) holds, is that development is traditionally defined in terms of the capacity of the economy to generate growth. Eade's (1997:99) contribution to the debate is that he believes that raising the economic capacities of poor women, men and the youth in a way that is both equitable and sustainable, would demand a range of technical and organizational skills.** Rahman (1993:187) takes note that the dominant class and its allies developed certain consumption standards that has enabled them to influence society so that to attain these standards came to be regarded as the purpose of life itself.

The world is at a point in history, in the view of Fernandes (1970:232), when the development of economic life could diminish social inequalities, if that development were guided and coordinated in a reasonable and human way. Fernandes (1970:232) believes that a modern economy is characterized not only by man's increasing domination over nature, but also by closer and more intense relationships between citizens, groups, countries, by their

mutual dependence, and by more frequent intervention on the part of governments. Economic development according to Isbister (2006:147) is a complex process.

These views demand an investigation into the schools of thought with regard to the meaning of economic development in order to come to a comprehensive view of what is meant by economic development.

In order to get an understanding of economic development, literature will be surveyed on economics and economic development that intends to bring us to comprehension as to what is meant by economic development.

### 3.9.1 Understanding Economics within the Economic Development Debate

It is neither easy nor desirable to give a strict definition of economics, therefore Todaro (1990:4, 6) defines economics as the study and exercise of choice. The study of economics will assist us, according to Todaro (1992:10), with our search for explanations and possible answers to vital development problems.

The very word economy - *oikos nomos*, states Atherton (1992:37), is derived from the Greek for household (*oikos*) and law or management (*nomos*) where production was predominantly for and within the household context. Economics in its creation derives from the Greek *oikonomikos*, which is stewardship of the *oikos* or community of the household (Smith 2005:22). In making sense of Aristotle's view of economics, Duchrow (1998; 21) came to the conclusion that it is the prime goal of a natural economy to meet the basic human needs. For Smith (2005:22) *oikonomia* means the care exercised by the economist or management or steward for the household (*Oikos*) that is entrusted to him or her. Stewardship on the other hand, Smith (2005:34) states, means looking after someone or something for somebody for a period of time and it is the steward's responsibility to ensure that those who are entrusted to him or her know what is right and what is wrong. This suggests that stewards need morals, rules, a conscience and wisdom.

Adam Smith according to Atherton (1992:40) is seen as one of the architects of modern economics that is now characterised by specialisation, the division of labour, self-interest as a basic motivator, and the consequential dependence on the interdependence of markets as we know them.

Black (1997:137) and Roux (1996:3) view economics to be the study of how scarce resources are used to satisfy their needs or should be allocated and is therefore in agreement with Atherton (1992:51,240) that economics is about facing up to the realities of life as they

really are and about making choices. Positive economics is concerned with what actually happens, or what would happen under various conditions in the view of Black (1997:137). Roux (1996:3) continues to state that the economic process demands certain considerations as to what goods and services should be produced and for whom they should be produced. In essence economics is the study of human behavior as economists base their analyses and forecasts on the behavior of people who make numerous economic decisions (Roux (1996:4). Interestingly Rahman (1993:223) states that from a ideological point of view economics puts economic development as the central concern for development within the conventional development paradigm in which the dominating structures and the professions serving them presume to decide what the people's aspirations and needs should be.

Smith (2005:11) explains that economics is part of our lives in a large extent, influencing what we do and say. According to Smith (2005:12), economics is a social science where an economist will observe and interpret all sorts of economic activity to attempt to understand trends and structures, or to create new economic approaches to structures. As a social science economics according to Todaro and Smith (2006:13), is concerned with human beings and the social systems by which they organize their activities to satisfy basic material needs. Economics in the view of Rahman (1993:225) does have the potential value for serving human aspirations. However, it is beyond doubt that Smith (2005:14) believes that economics can be very cruel because, generally speaking, to the rich it is about money, wealth and improved standards of living which is worshipped as a god while those without money or credit rating, economically do not exist. Hence it does not come as a surprise that Smith ask that attention needs to be given to developing techniques of using economic forces to serve the whole community, the winners and the losers, without excessive governmental political intervention (Smith 2005:15). In a free market economy, households and businesses are entitled to improve their own welfare or profit, argues Roux (1990:4). Economics for Marshall, in the view of Atherton (1992:36) is a study of mankind in the ordinary business of life, the bread and butter of life, whether in all its simplicity in the households of the ancient Greeks, or in the modern multinational corporation that supplies soap to space ships.

Lapsey (1993:8) defines economics to be concerned with the allocation of a society's resources among alternative uses and the distribution of the society's output among individuals and groups at a point in time; the ways in which allocation and distribution

change over time and the efficiencies and inefficiencies of economic systems. It seems that obtaining the greatest value from resources as a goal of economic choices will be the basis for economic development (Carbaugh 2001:4).

### **3.10 Towards a Definition of Economic Development**

Carmen (1996:5) defines economic development as a process of change mediated by some form of human intervention. Economic development according to Todaro and Smith (2006:14) has been typically seen in terms of the planned alteration of the structure of production and employment so that agriculture's share of both declines and that of the manufacturing and service industries increased. Problems of poverty, discrimination, unemployment and income distribution were of secondary importance to 'getting the growth job done' as it was understood that social benefits will flow from economic growth opportunities. This in view of Todaro and Smith (2006:15) was part of the reason why economic development came to be redefined in terms of the reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context of a growing economy. Economic development refers to the improvement of living conditions and the improvement in the quality of life as mentioned in chapter 1 by Mohr, Fourie and Associates (2003: 635). The kind of change in the structure of the economy in South Korea since 1960 is ideal economic development according to Gillis, Perkins, Roemer and Snodgrass (2006:8).

The concept of economic development represent for Todaro and Smith (2006:13) implicit as well explicit value premises about desirable goals for achieving what Mahatma Gandhi once called the "realization of the human potential". Economic development cannot be value-free so where there serious value conflicts and disagreements exist among decision makers, the possibility of a consensus about desirable goals or appropriate policies is considerably diminished (Todaro and Smith 2006:14).

Nafziger (2006:15) suggest that economic development refers to economic growth accompanied by changes in output distribution and economic structures. These changes, Nafziger (2006:15) reasons, may include an improvement in the material well-being of the poorer half of the population, a decline in agriculture's share of GDP and a corresponding increase in the GDP share of industry and services; an increase in the education and skills of the labor force and substantial technical advances originating within the country. According to Cypher and Dietz (2003:8), economic development is about realizing very fundamental

human values and about finding the means to extend the fruits of these values, that includes the opportunity for meaningful employment, the possibility to provide for one's self and one's family, sufficient food; the opportunity for pursuing education; a reasonable level of health care; social security; political participation in the life of the community and society; equal treatment under the law and in the economy for all, to the greatest majority of the world's population. With the emphasis on creating employment as a goal of economic development Wilson and Ramphela (1989:158) warns that the fear of unemployment and its consequences adds greatly to the burden of poverty. Economic development touches our shared humanity (Cypher and Dietz 2003:8).

Burkey (1993:36) would be in agreement with scholars like Cypher and Dietz, as he share the view that economic development is a process by which people through their own individual and joint efforts boost production for direct consumption to sell for cash. This view of economic development finds support in the argument by Gillis, Perkins, Roemer and Snodgrass (2006:8, 16), who believe that a key element in economic development is that the people of the country must be major participants in the process that intends to bring about economic change.

Steytler (1997:18) would like to define economic development as the balancing of four competing aims: economic growth, stability of currency, equilibrium of foreign trade and a high level of employment.

Economic development does not happen on its own and therefore policy-makers involved in economic development need to know when and how to get to new strategies when needed (Cypher and Dietz (2003: xx). The state, according to Steytler (1997:18), plays a major role in supporting and promoting the balance between these four aims and can use its own budget to influence the economy, can provide a framework of conditions and legal instruments to create or maintain stability in economic development. Well, critically for this research would be to ask if Steytler would see the church as one of the role players achieving his goal.

An important point is made by Isbister ( 2007:185,186) when he asks the question whether the world can act cooperatively and effectively in achieving the Millennium Development Goals that is key to economic development. The Millennium Development Goals as stated by White (2006:382) are a set of goals for a range of development indicators setting targets, most which are supposed to be met by 2015, which have been endorsed by many governments and international agencies. Isbister (2007:185,186) suggest that these development goals can

transform the scourge of world poverty as it includes the following:

1. Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.
2. Achieve universal primary education as it intends to ensure that children will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health and by so doing reduce the maternal mortality ratio by 2015
6. Combat HIV and AIDS, Malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability and secure that the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation be halved by 2015 and by 2020 achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.
8. Develop a global partnership for development as trading and international financial systems are reformed.

### **3.11 Economic Development and Economic Growth**

Economic development, in view of Midgley (1997:193), should directly improve people's welfare. There can be no economic development without economic growth according to Gillis, Perkins, Roemer and Snodgrass (2006:8). Midgley (1997:193) further argues that although proponents of social development are critical of conventional economic growth models, they accept that economic growth is a prerequisite for enhancing people's welfare. Growth according to Conradie (2006:29) is seen as the key to create sufficient wealth for a growing world population. According to Bragg (1987:22) modernization theorists hold the position that post World War II development is to diffuse the industrial system of the West to the "less-developed" countries with its ultimate goal to increase production and economic growth in order to raise the standard of living of the people. A very clear warning is brought into the argument by Graaff (2003:7) when he states that healthy economic growth is no guarantee against widening inequality. The obsession with economic growth that today shapes all policies, in both North and South, is according to Rist (2010:261), bound up with a totally unrealistic vision of the world and should in his view be not only denounced but fought against. This is the reason why Midgley (1997:193) states that economic growth must result in the increased participation of the whole population in order to improve income and standards of living for all. With the reality that healthy growth does not mean wealth for all, Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:143) mentions that in the Latin American context it was



discovered that positive rates of economic growth were possible only with an appropriate policy of growth and development based on a strategy of industrialization by means of import substitution. Growth still seems to be the way to secure the economic and social integration of the population (Duchrow and Hinkelammert 2004:151). However, we are warned by Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:151) that growth in a world economy based on the strategy of globalisation, can be as high as it like, but it will do nothing to change the exclusion of a ever larger part of the population. It is for this reason that Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:151) mention that the Prussian economic reformer, Frederick List argued for tariff protection for industries during a transition period in which the developing industry is to become competitive. Sengupta (2000:567) aligns himself with some academic economists who believe that the idea of development went far beyond growth in output and material wealth, to include welfare and equity, or at least the improvement of the lot of the poor.

South Africa serves as proof as to what can go wrong as it grew at quite spectacular rates during the 1950s and 1960s, but it produced one of the most extreme cases of inequality in the world according to (Graaff 2003:7). It is clear that Graaff is of the opinion that it takes more than just a good economy to eradicate poverty and inequality, therefore his plea for morally sound political and economic policies and people. The challenge that he poses needs to be taken seriously when he states that there must be something fundamentally wrong with a planet which has the resources to send a rocket to Venus, but where more than a billion individuals survive on US\$ 1 a day (Graaff 2003:11). Conradie (2006:29) adds to the debate that continued economic growth and a significant expansion of the number of affluent economies are barely possible due to the limited available resources, the history of colonisation, the control over existing markets by powerful companies and access to cheap labour as well as the genitive impact on the environment. According to Swanepoel (2006:12) the economic environment is very important in community development as well as the management of resources.

As mentioned in chapter1, Todaro (1989:62) argues that economic development should be perceived as a *multidimensional* process involving the reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social systems. It is exactly with this view in mind that the researcher aims to explore literature in order to be informed as to what role the church could play in economic development. It is however important to note that a finite planet cannot sustain



continuous, expanding demands on its resources (Conradie 2006:29). In light of this reality Conradie (2006:30) reckons that wasteful consumption and population growth must necessarily be addressed in order to reduce the environmental impact of current levels of consumption. The notion of sustainable development, in the view of Conradie (2006:32), is widely regarded as a key concept to redirect the global economic order towards an alternative way of dealing with the earth's carrying capacity. For the purpose of this thesis it would not be possible to explore literature that deals with correctives against expansionist notions of economic growth.

### **3.12 The Intention of Economic Development**

In view of Burkey (1993:36), it is clear that those who are advocates of economic development would want to see that the people involved get the opportunity to do an analysis of their context themselves, identify the issues, set their priorities and then acquire the means to address the problems. This process, Burkey (1993:36) contends, would require of them to organize them in order to coordinate and mobilize the effective application of all the factors of production at their disposal. The desired goal and intention of economic development according to Burkey (1993:36) would be that the people would be role players in the planning, implementing and managing of the economic activities enabling them to realize greater well-being. Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:155) would reason that the intention of economic development must be that a strategy of development and protection of sustainable local and regional forms of economy, combined with macroeconomic public interventions must be in place to block and regulate a globalisation directed purely towards the accumulation of capital.

Terreblanche (2005:84) draws our attention to the views and ideologies of the ANC on the intention of the economy as set out in the Freedom Charter of 1995 as part of the reasoning behind economic development:

- The people shall share in the country's wealth
- The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africa's, shall be restored to the people.
- The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks, and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole.

- All other industries and trade shall be controlled to assist the well being of people.

According to Terreblanche's (2005:108) understanding behind the freedom charter, the ANC Government developed what they called the RDP as guidelines as from 1994, to overcome the legacy of apartheid and to rectify the unbearable conditions created by apartheid among black South Africans. Terreblanche (2005:108) informs us that the one of the intentions of the RDP was aimed at fundamentally restructuring the economy as it addresses the distortions and injustices that had become part of South African society during racial capitalism and white political domination.

With the RDP not being a success in terms of economic development, the South African Government in 1996 through its minister of finance announced a new macroeconomic strategy entitled Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) with the view to provide the country with a comprehensive and well-integrated macroeconomic framework and the intention to create jobs (Terreblanche 2005:114). With all good intentions by the Government to create economic growth, Terreblanche (2005:121) mentions that the economic growth rate was unsatisfactory, the unemployment problem bigger, the distribution of income more unequal and the poverty problem far more serious.

One can support Smith's (2005:89) view that everybody has a right to life, food, good health, a home, hope and happiness but again this right can not be at the expense of or deprivation of others. Smith (2005:95) advocates that hunger and poverty in a developed democratic economy should be less of a problem as the state is charged by its people to ensure that the refugees, the poor and the unemployed have enough food.

The question remains whether the church finds itself equipped for this transforming task or even does the church even regard this as part of its task?

### **3.13 Challenges to Economic Development**

Genuine development work is that which empowers people and this can be very challenging if there is no collective action, argues Wilson and Ramphela (1989:262)

Unlike the more developed countries, in the less developed countries, most commodity and resource markets are highly imperfect, consumers and producers have limited information and major structural changes are taking place in both the society and the economy (Todaro and Smith 2006:9). In most of the third world countries, the history of economic development has been a history of false promises (Isbister 2006:157). The false answers, according to

Isbister (2006:157), included nationalism and independence, socialism and government planning, industrial growth and a shift away from agriculture, foreign aid and capital investment, investment in human capital, a hike in oil prices and the new international economic order.

Conradie (2006:32,33) critically asks whether the economic development programs is focussed on sustainable development that would not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs rather than just putting emphasis on economic growth and market expansion. The economic problem is not simply about facing up to the contemporary situation warns Atherton (1992:51). The consumption of the few has become a strain on many as the physical resources of the earth certainly cannot support a whole world that consumes on the level of the west, is the legitimate concern that Braggs share (1987:26).

We are reminded by Braggs (1987:25) about the unintended results that actually threatens any future development when he mentions that tribal people are bearing the brunt of the accelerated pace of Third World modernization because their way of life is not tied into money markets, and therefore is considered unimportant.

The economic development initiatives need to, at all times, in the South African context, take into account the destructive effects of non economics such as the forceful removals and the Group areas Act had on the majority of South Africans such as increased rents and transportation costs, the overcrowding in cheaply built houses according to Wilson and Ramphele (1989:217)

Amongst the challenges faced by economic development is that in addition to the youth, women and the elderly that need to be able to access resources for their development, are those who may be defined as disabled in some way as those who are disabled find it difficult to earn a reasonable income because society assumes that disabled people cannot do as much as others (Wilson and Ramphele 1989:183). Population growth for Lapsey (1993:743) is a central problem of economic development. Lapsey (1993:743) argues that if population grows as quickly as national income, per capita income does not increase, we will find ourselves in serious trouble. Again Wilson and Ramphele(1989:184) brings a challenge to the economic development debate when they mention vagrants in our cities that does not have adequate housing, either because they are too poor to afford rent, there is simply no housing available or they are unemployed and therefore cannot afford housing. Poor health is likewise

a source of inadequate human resources argues Lapsey (1993:745)

The observation of Terreblanche (2005:434) needs to be taken serious when he refers to the situation at present in South Africa, that many workers have been turned into casual and contract workers without the benefit and security of full-time employment. Exploitation of these workers, even more so than workers in the formal sector under apartheid, can now be the case as rightly noted by Terreblanche (2005:434) that new labour legislation does not protect people against the often-inhuman exploitation in the peripheral and 'casual' sector. Bureaucratic inefficiency, notes Wilson and Ramphela (1989:158), can have a devastating and humiliating effect on the people and their economic environment waiting for Unemployment Insurance Fund benefits, disability grants, workmen's compensation allowances and old age pensions. A well-developed entrepreneurial class, motivated and trained to organize resources for efficient production, is often missing in less developed countries and this form of inadequate human resource in the view of Lapsey (1993:745), leads to economic development barriers. Inadequate infrastructure, inadequate financial institutions and excessive Government intervention are all causes for underdevelopment noted by Lapsey (1993:743,744,746).

A racial shift from having one group to benefit at the expense of another must be replaced with a genuine democracy are essential for economic development as part of the process of transforming the South African economy but in view of Wilson and Ramphela( 1989:258) this might take years and is again open for corruption by the present role players. The unequal distribution of wealth stays a challenge and is partly the result of the lasting legacy of colonialism, which provided colonising countries access to raw materials, cheap labour and convenient opportunities to 'export' but caused impoverishment for many and the exclusion of the indigenous people (Conradie 2006:28).

Another challenge for economic development would be dependant economies, where economic development is mostly needed, as it often suffers under uneven growth patterns while advancement and stagnation can occur simultaneously in different areas of the same country according to Braggs (1987:29).

Still another challenge to economic development would clearly be that political power structures need to be infused by a value system that can ensure that the process of economic development and the creation of a caring society is of real benefit to all those living in it (Wilson and Ramphela 1989:267). Values such as honesty, obligation, and trust, without

which the markets could not survive, are needed to assist the markets against self-interest, selfishness and monopolies (Atherton 1992:68).

### 3.14 Unemployment and Economic Development

A simple definition of unemployment according to Cawker and Whiteford (1993:2, 20) is that it exists whenever the demand for labour in an economy is unable to match the supply of labour in that economy. Scholars like Davies and Thurlow (2010:437,455,456) , Barker (1993:5,112) and Tsaliki (2008:437) view unemployment as one of South Africa's most pressing socio-economic challenges and a major barriers to entry in the informal sector affecting a quarter of the workforce.

Tsaliki (2008:773,774) argues that unemployment is a systemic element of the normal operation of the labour market. The reasoning behind this view according to Tsaliki (2008:774) is that there is no motive what so ever to fully employ the labour force; instead, the profit motive of the private enterprise system is to fully employ its capital stock. In other words, the normal utilization of the capital stock is not necessarily associated with any specific level of employment or unemployment of labour. Cawker and Whiteford (1993: 37) argue that the major cause of unemployment in South Africa has been the inability of the economy to grow at a rate required to absorb a burgeoning labour force. Unemployment has grave consequences for any country as it can lead to unrest, damage to a stable democratic order and can leave people with the impression that the market economy is at best not able to address the problem as well as it being responsible for unemployment, according to Barker (1995:113). Cloete (in 2009:82) mentions that the unemployment rate for 2005 in South Africa was 38.8% where 65% of unemployed people in South Africa have never worked before. In view of David *ed al* (2011:87) social responsibility initiatives by trade unions is to deal with the roots of poverty, unemployment and other development-related problems among workers and their families. Cawker and Whiteford( Jaartal: bl nommer) suggest that the main objective of a strategy aimed at creating lasting employment opportunities in South Africa should be to direct the economy towards a more labour-intensive, high economic growth path.

Interestingly Chibba and Luiz (2011:307) argue that the interconnectedness of poverty, inequality and unemployment (PIU) is obvious in societies to even the casual observer based

on considerable empirical evidence to support such an observation. Cloete (2009:84) support the idea that unemployment is closely linked to poverty. In terms of the effects of unemployment, it is viewed by scholars such as Cloete (2009:84) as predominantly negative with some of the following effects such as; family breakdowns, suicides, broken marriages, child battering and gangsterism. Apart from the many financial hardship caused by unemployment Cloete (1009:84) mentions that there are also psychological effects like low self-esteem, decline in respect of children for their parents, a decline in respect of parents for each other and the optimism of the youth for the future can be destroyed by unemployment. When looking at the dynamics of unemployment, Standing, Sender and Weeks (1996:122) discovered that most of the unemployed rely on informal family income transfers.

With reference to the challenges that unemployment pose to the South African society, the role and task of economic development seems to be of paramount importance seeing that it refers to the improvement of living conditions and the improvement in the quality of life as mentioned in chapter 1 by Mohr, Fourie and Associates (2003: 635). Nurnburger (1999:445) argue that the church and NGOs can become the voice of the poor and the unemployed, expose inequitable structures, challenge the state and the private sector to their moral obligation towards economic development. Reducing unemployment according to Standing et al (1996:128) should be a major challenge preoccupying policymakers, including employer and worker representatives.

In terms of this research it is important to ask whether church would find it as part of its calling to address the unemployment problems as a means to be involved in economic development.

### **3.15 Religious Convictions and the Economic Development Debate**

Religion and religious groups are in many ways well placed in society to play a powerful role in development and can be tools which according to Clarke (2011:10), inherently has much to say on development outcomes. The first recorded case of civil disobedience as stated by Maggay (1994:36) was when Peter and John declared before the Jewish court, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29), and this has been followed by many more cases throughout the history where the church has been forced to challenge the powers that be because of its commitment to a higher power and a higher principle. As noted by Handelman

(2006:46), in Brazil and Nicaragua, the theology of liberation espoused by progressive members of the Catholic Church, motivated by priests and nuns to organize the poor against economic and political injustice, placed the church in a position of caring for the well-being of humans. Handelman's view would find support from Smith (2003:22) and Nürnberger (2007:45) in that religion can influence development in the lives of people. Early Christianity spread throughout the whole Roman Empire and the oppressed and exploited people felt attracted by these new possibilities of life thanks to rich congregations that shared for the benefit of the congregations that had fallen on hard times (Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:27). The struggle for liberation in view of Boesak (1977:18), created a new consciousness and a longing for the breaking of the chains of dependency and to seek a way out of which oppressed people are forced to live by, as seen in the actions of people like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. Malcolm X had an immediate impact on the proponents of black power like Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver in the late 1960's as well as being subjected to many academic discussions and being reflected on by a new generation of street poets and young "rappers", (Boesak 1995:142). This is why there is meaning in the view of Sethi (1995:864) when he states that the leadership of the Catholic Church has always maintained that its responsibility extends into all arenas of human endeavour, personal and social, including economic enterprises that occupy such a large part of most people's lives.

Religious convictions, in view of Handelman (2006:49), was behind the protest marches lead by Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka and so also by Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States of America (US), indicating to us the role that religion plays in influencing how societies think about economic and civil issues. The black struggle for liberation and the conviction based on the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ has been kept alive by the black church movement, which was begun in South Africa by Nehemiah Tile and in the US by Richard Allen ( Boesak 1977:36). Christian participation in debates over development policies flows from the concern for the poor that is central to the Gospel message, states Sherman in Stackhouse, McCann and Roels with Williams (1995:925). Driven by her religious convictions we are reminded by August (2010:19) that the church must address exploitation of people and must always seek to challenge all types of economic, religious and political structures that contribute to the suffering of the poor. Koopman (in De Gruchy, Koopman, Strijbos 2008:34) is reminded by Archbishop Desmond Tutu that Jesus came to earth because God loves the world, as to say that God is involved in the world and so must we be. De Gruchy (2008:9)

states that the intensive engagement with the context of apartheid in fighting for a new dispensation was the great strength of the Christian witness in South Africa. The Dalai Lama's long struggle to free the Tibetan people from Chinese occupation, motivated by his religious convictions, has won him worldwide admiration and the Nobel Prize (Handelman 2006:50). Papal declaration, Handelman (2006:52) argues, within the Catholic Church hierarchical ecclesiastical tradition can carry considerable weight in addressing political and developmental issues.

### **3.15 Conclusion**

In surveying and interrogating the literature on development and economic development, it seems as if to me that that there is not much difference in terms of the meaning of the two terms. The following conclusions would be a reasonable reflection on what could be deduced from the literature:

One can deduce from the scholars exploring development and economic development studies and attempting to define these terms, that the following would be a combination of development and economic development:

Development is a concept that carries with it the connotation of a favourable change that moves from worse to better or an action that advances away from the inferior. In terms of an unacceptable social order, scholars reason that development is the process of social change that intends to lead to progress. At the same time scholars concluded that the intention of economic development is to improve living conditions. This should then enlarge people's choices and so give them access to resources for a decent standard of living. One can then clearly see that economic development intends to give people the ability to control transformation of the social structure, leading to some form of economic growth, political autonomy and social reconstruction.

The above views, stated in the literature, seem to imply that economic development has as its intention to create a condition for the realization of a better life for those who struggle under poverty and economic limitations. The literature further stated that economic development is based on human well-being that strives for social and economic justice, comprehensive consultation and joint decision-making, the elimination of all forms of suffering and the advancement of people through their own endeavours. Core values included in policies that guide the economic development processes seems a necessity if the goals of economic



development are to be achieved.

The next chapter will deal with the views of scholars concerning the role of the church in economic development. The intention would be to search if there is a body of literature that can serve as a basis for the church to see herself as a critical role player in economic development. The exact economic form which these economic development actions should take on as well as the form of structures within which they are required to operate in order to address specific needs of a particular society will be explored.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Justice and life are the basic perspectives and the golden thread of biblical tradition and this forms part of the basis for the church's involvement in economic development (Duchrow and Hinkelammert 2004:158).

The previous chapter reflected critically on what scholars view to be the meaning and implications of the terms development and economic development. By consulting the body of literature a comprehensive body of facts has been produced in a logical fashion that could help in the quest to establish whether scholars view as part of the role of the church economic development, or not.

The attention will now turn to presenting views of scholars on the role of the church in economic development based on literature that deals with the issue in the early church, in mission and in history as well as in the contemporary debate. In terms of the contemporary debate, the focus will be on the views and contributions of the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, The World Communion of Reformed Churches as well as the World Pentecostal Conference. This chapter will consider the contemporary social teaching of the different church traditions in order to gain insights to how economic development is both understood and practiced in these traditions as viewed by scholars. This chapter will also attempt to place the Rhenish Church, Elsie's River in its physical environment within the Western Cape in order to gain some understanding as to what is viewed as the role of the church in economic development.

#### **4.2 A Historical Basis for the Role of the Church in Economic Development**

Economic themes recur throughout the Bible (Castro: 1992). The question at hand for the

church is really if there is a history of the church being involved in economic development as part of her ministry? If so, has this economic developmental role of the church been passed on from one generation to the other? Does the church really have a culture of being involved in development and then the economic development of the members and the community she find herself in?

While religious groups are primarily concerned with providing spiritual leadership Clarke (2011:2, 3) observes that an interest in the physical welfare of their communities has also been a core aspect of their existence with the intention to enhance the welfare of the local community.

Obviously, the church does not have a blueprint for action, argues Fernandes (1970:239), as it is not the mission of the Church to propose concrete solutions to the problems of development but if it is to *co-operate in finding the solution to the out-standing problems of our time*, then, unquestionably, there is need of strategic thought and action based on the fact that, "theory without practice is sterile, just as practice without theory is blind."

As the church seek to strengthen her legitimacy in the domain of economic development, Tsele (2001:209) argues that historically the church has an obligation to demonstrate that it brings something substantive to the economic development table and that her commitment are driven by different motives. The church historian, McKee (1989:64) draws our attention as mentioned in chapter 2, to the caring role of the church in mentioning that John Calvin taught that the diaconate role of the church is seen as a permanent ecclesiastical ministry of care for the poor and sick and the physical suffering of human beings. Responding to the materially poor, according to Clarke (2011:2), has a long history in many religious groups and individuals motivated by concepts of religious charity to provide material care, comfort, education and health facilities often long before nation states provided such institutions.

Tsele (2001:209) argue that by reintroducing faith-inspired motives in development, which seek to restore the dignity of the church's work and which in turn make people subjects in their own human restoration project, the church's development enterprise can be authentic. The Body of Christ, His Church, historically has the responsibility in its developmental role to assist humans in bringing them towards the place of complete reconciliation with God and with their fellows and their environment according to Moffitt (1987:235). If the church's role in economic development does not seek transformation and liberation of the poor from conditions of dependency and structures of oppression, it is ideological and thus its authenticity is in doubt according to Tsele (2001:209).

Sider (1981:19) brings an interesting view to the debate when he argues that the church's involvement in development flows out of Christ's command to love one's neighbor and in so doing we are linking one's self with God's own work in history and in human society. Early Christianity was a brotherhood and sisterhood of equal partners on the basis of the baptism of the Spirit and theologically and sociologically on the basis of the Roman Hellenistic model of free societies (Schillebeeckx 1985:47). Christian commitment to action in the world involves struggle in society and this struggle arises out of Christian understanding of the world, hence Samuel and Sugden (1990:45). In the words of Bloesch (2002:64) as mentioned in chapter 2, the church is basically "a life support system not only enabling its members to survive in a cruel and hostile world but also empowering them to prevail over the principalities and powers of this world" As was stated by Küng (1973:486) in chapter 2, the Church was called in existence for the world by being committed to the world and is therefore in pro-existence and involved in the world.

It is not the task of the church to conjure up some alternative to both capitalism and socialism but as Villa-Vicencio (1992:232) states that it is the task of the church to subject economic systems to the demands of the gospel which affirms the dignity of all people and their obligation to work for a more just social order. The church is called to be a caring community in view of Bosch (1982:10) and this would imply that the church be involved with and concerned about the economics of the day. In order for people to live, they must have the basic means of subsistence but, Villa-Vicencio (1992:205) argues, that the basic necessities of life are simply not always available to the majority of the world's population because they are unevenly distributed. It is important to note the view of Cardinal Maurice Roy (1995:807) as stated in chapter 2, that the massive economic sharing of the earliest Christian Church is a indisputable act as he finds in the book of Acts the evidence of economic sharing.

It is the task of the church to keep alive a social vision in support of economic initiatives which, in the view of Villa-Vicencio (1992:232), will shape, bend and redirect the world economic order as well as individual national economies towards the benefit of those who suffer most in society. As the economy takes over all areas of our life and the flow of money determines who we are, Rieger (2009:154) concludes that those who do not benefit from the economy or the market are at an ever greater disadvantage. The reality, Rieger (2009:154) argues, is that those without employment or funds or economic development opportunities are

worst off and any worker who has nothing to rely on but his or her labour power cannot expect to fare well in this system. Religion can support or sabotage alternative approaches to economic development (Rieger 2009:155). The fundamental right of people not to be reduced to the mere consequence of economic and material forces is theologically non-negotiable according to Villa-Vicencio (1992:209). For this reason Villa-Vicencio (1992:218) is of the opinion that a conflict between economics and theology is inevitable when it is argued that the situation is best left untampered with and that market forces should be allowed to take their toll. Theologically, economic management and development in view of Villa-Vicencio (1992:219) is about ensuring the best possible livelihood for everyone and it is about liberating economic structures to ensure that no one is exploited.

#### **4.3 The Early Church and the Economic Development Debate**

The Torah, in regulating and limiting the buying and selling of goods, the cultivation of land and the raising of animals, placed all economic activity within God's covenant relationship with Israel (Castro:1992). Included in this covenant relationship was concern for the poor, for the stranger, the widow and orphan and even the environment (Castro: 1992).

In Israel it was Yahweh who heard the cries of the slaves, the oppressed and poor, and liberated them from the slave-owner, the oppressor and the rich while the prophets criticised the injustice of the kingly aristocratic systems (Duchrow and Hinkelammert 2004:157). The core of these criticisms according to Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:157) is: all must be able to live, and this is in their view why the biblical perspective starts from the cry of the poor and those whose livelihood is threatened. The liberation from Egypt of Israel by Yahweh means that the protection of the weak and oppressed was linked inseparably to justice within the liberated and protected community (Duchrow 1998:147). At the center of God's Covenant with Israel we are reminded, by Horsley (2009:48), was the principles that protected the people's economic rights and as a kind of insurance against the contingencies of inadequate harvests and the resulting hunger and starvation, the Covenant included provisions for economic support from the resources of the community. Families in the villages were commanded to leave gleanings in their fields and orchards and the crops that grew without cultivation during sabbatical fallow years as food to supplement the inadequate crops of the needy families in order to enable them to be economically viable (Horsley 2009:48).

The Bible, according to Horsley (2009:18), is concerned with all of life and in his

understanding of ancient Israel, religion and political-economic life was inseparable. Horsley (2009:31) draws our attention to the Ten Commandment and states that each of the last six or seven commandments serves to protect people's rights in a particular key area of societal life as every one of those rights, in his view, is basically economic or has an important economic aspect. In biblical times, the resistance groups speaking out in the Jewish apocalyptic writings and the communities of Jesus the Messiah did not only reject the gods of gold and Mammon according to Duchrow (1998:240), but they also had a vision of alternatives and they put those into practice in the way they led their daily lives. The basis for an alternative economy for Duchrow (1998; 243) is that it must be life sustaining where people are players and not economic objects.

The importance of Christ's command to His followers, the foundation of the early church, to go into the entire world to proclaim the gospel and make disciples underlines for Gibbs and Coffey (2001:59) the objective of sending the church out into the world bearing the good news. Caleb (2002:48) reminds us that if there is one commandment that runs through the entire New Testament it is the commandment to "love one's neighbor as oneself." The commandment is found in all three Synoptic gospels (Matt. 22:39, Mark 12:31 and Luke 10:27). In his letter to the Galatians Caleb (2002:48) notes, Paul says that the whole law is summed up in a single commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Galatians 5:14). He (Caleb 2002:48) further stresses the point that in the letter of James this commandment is called the royal law (James 3:8). Translated into economic terms, the commandment means that each obeyer of the commandment must seek to provide for those in need (the Parable of the Good Samaritan establishes that the person in need whom I can help, is the neighbor), with the same economic opportunities and goods as he or she possesses (Caleb 2002:48). Just as one would wish to have one's basic needs met and various opportunities to grow provided, this commandment asks of us to think about providing the same to those in need. This commandment, Caleb (2002:48) argues, is therefore ultimately calling for the provision of the basic needs of all people, as well as a great measure of equality, for giving to another in need what one would wish for oneself must eventually lead to a great measure of material equality. It was the following of this commandment that led to the community being formed in Acts, where those who had more wealth sold their goods in order to provide for the needy according to Caleb (2002:48). While this happened only among the followers of Jesus, the commandment that Jesus gave is for all humankind, and the church

by practicing the commandment becomes the prototype of the new creation that has been inaugurated with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ according to Caleb (2002:49).

Horsley (2009:31) reminds us that the ideal life for ancient Israelite farmers was living in peace and they used to dream about a future utopia in the fantastic terms of God's creating "new heavens and a new earth." Duchrow (1998:144) refers to C. Boerma that pointed out that no concept of 'poor' is to be found in Genesis that, according to him is an indication there was a lack of difference between poor and rich opposed to indications of great prosperities. Biblically based economic development in the light of Horsley's position as stated above and in view of Moffitt (1987:235) is any movement of individuals in the mental, physical, spiritual, social and economic arenas towards God's present and future purpose for us.

Jesus links up with the Jewish idea that Israel should be an *alternative society* which is so attractive that all the peoples should come in astonishment to Zion and change in its image, taking on a human face and making God king of every area of their lives (Duchrow (1998:182). The most distinctive economic feature of the assemblies of Christ was the collection that Paul and his co-workers were gathering according to Horsley (2009:143) "for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem". Horsley (2009:143) purports that this collection was a historically unprecedented horizontal movement of economic resources among people subject to imperial rule as the tradition of the day was to move economic resources to the rulers. This project, Horsley (2009:143) argues, originated in the apostolic council where the apostles agreed to have Paul and co-workers proceed with his mission to non-Israelites, asking "only one thing, that we remember the poor" according to Galatians 2:10.

Horsley (2009:179) suggests that churches, synagogues, mosques might expand the economic dimension of their covenantal communities by three interrelated activities: Firstly they can expand the ways that they embody economic aspects of covenantal community. Secondly, they can serve a prophetic role in protesting the abuses of corporations, or more modestly an educational role in informing the public and also gain public attention in a society where corporations control the communications media. Thirdly, churches can take economic action as covenantal communities in the wider society. This could take the form of setting up separate economic programs or pressing government at various levels to provide needed services and to cease subsidizing corporations against the interest of the public.

Smith (2005:17), suggest that the owner of assets can only be a steward of that assets for a

certain amount of time and must therefore be mindful of how he or she exercise stewardship. The question one can pose to Smith is, if it is a given that the church would be one of the role players in assisting the state but also holding the state responsible the economic development of its citizens.

#### **4.4 Mission and the Role of the Church in Economic Development**

A holistic understanding of mission reaffirms the fact for Tsele (2001:214) that God is not only concerned with the supernatural, but is active in the secular life of humankind.

Küng (1973:72,80), draws attention in chapter 2 to how Jesus Christ saw the mission and mandate of the church in the fact that Jesus stresses a public ministry that rejects withdrawal from the world, that love sinners, a mission not only to gather up the ‘just’ but to gather up the *whole* Israel. He therefore states that the focal point of the church is the reign of God. A Church, which overlooks the fact that it is called to the selfless service of humanity, of its enemies and of the world, loses its dignity and the justification of its existence, argues Küng (1973:99). It can well be understood that Küng implies that the church should be involved in all spheres of life, even including the economic development of the community it serve. Drawing from Gibbs and Coffey (2001:57), the missional church will need to examine the Scriptures constantly, bringing different questions to the text in light of changing circumstances and new insights that arise out of engaging with the culture and the context. With Meyer’s (2006:123) view as stated in chapter 1 that practical theology is to analyze and comprehend critical societal and personal issues as well as to determine what the specific message of the liberating gospel is for us today, it seems that is what Gibbs and Coffey as well as Küng is suggesting.

Swanepoel (2006:17) sees the church as a stakeholder or a role player that can perform certain functions as its mission, and by so doing have the potential to address the issues of a community in need, including the economic development issues. Like trade unions, it seems the church should give a voice to their members, reflect their interests and produce a common position that will contribute to future economic and social development. The Church according Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:220) should take up the responsibility to call upon their governments to end their neo-liberal policies with regard to the global market, where they are structurally abolishing the constitutional commitment of property ownership to social justice and the common good.



Development work for Tsele (in Belshaw, Calderisi and Sudgen 2001:214) is the work of God and is therefore part of God's own mission to the world. Development is not something that the churches are busy with apologetically, or by default so that it is not seen that the church is busy with a social gospel (Tsele 2001:214). The church, in the view of James (1992:79), is a vitally important institution in economic development as the church is seen as a "mediating institution" that stands between the individual in his or her private sphere and the large institutions of the public sphere. With this view in mind it seems necessary to recognise the position of Koopman that states that churches can help to address the plight of schools in the previously disadvantage communities through enhancing the process of the fulfilment of human rights, one of the instrument in the restoration of the dignity to all (Koopman 2008:40).

The challenge posed to the missional church with regard to her involvement in economic development is highlighted by Conradie (2006:38) when he refers to a letter to the churches from the consultation on 'The economy in the service of life', held at Soesterberg in the Netherlands, 15-19 June 2002 that states:

*"The gospel promises life in all its fullness for all people and the whole creation (John 10:10). This promise was incarnated in Jesus Christ. Nobody is excluded from God's household of life. The Christian community reflects this vision for the sake of the whole world. Guided by this vision, we strive for an economy in the service of life. Market and money should enable the exchange of goods in order to satisfy human needs and contribute to the building of human community. Today, however, we see a growing domination of real life by private financial and corporate interests. Economic globalization is guided by a logic which gives priority to accumulating capital, unbridled competition and the securing of profit in narrowing markets. Political and military powers are used as instruments to secure safe access to resources and protect investment in trade".*

Mission work that seeks to fight systems and structures that bring misery and death to people is not without its dangers; therefore the church needs divine support. Boesak (1995:24) draws our attention to this fact in that he mentions that the first missionary from the religious community of Hernnhut at the Cape in 1737, after establishing a mission station among the Khoi-Khoi at Genadendal, was later forced to leave after experiencing frustration. In 1792 the Moravians, however were allowed to resume their activities and by the middle of the

nineteenth century, Boesak (1995:24) notes, the mission comprised of seven stations on the Hernnhut pattern: self-supporting and where the people could learn skills. With reference to the Moravian missionaries in South Africa, August (2009:216) states that from a very early stage the inhabitants on the mission stations were helped to erect simple structures, to respect the neighbours property, were trained to read and write, to garden and herd their livestock properly in order to protect the common good. Skills training and self-reliance according to August (2009:216) was thus an integral component of empowering the people by the missionaries. By educating the people, the missionaries in view of August (2009:58,216,217,225) also wanted to prevent the inhabitants from being exploited by shrewd farmers and the colonists, who wanted to use the inhabitants as a source of cheap labour, or as fighters in the colonial frontier wars. In Genadendal and all other Moravian mission stations August (2009:217) observed that school was compulsory, people were taken into apprenticeships as thatches, masons, carpenters, millers, car-wrights, printers, bookbinders, cartridge transport riders and they were taught the basic skills of farming.

It was through a visit on 24 October 1829, mentioned by Bilbe (2009:76), at a Moravian mission station that the Rhenish missionary, Gottlieb Leipoldt observed the work done by the missionaries on the mission station and commented as follows: “Each of the three brothers has their respective task. One oversees the Spiritual development, the other the gardens and fields and the third has control over industry.” These practices were soon to be adapted to the first Rhenish mission at Wupperthal (Bilbe 2009:76). The economic development program by the missionaries at Wupperthal caused an economic upswing by 1849 through the hat making industry and the agricultural development (Bilbe 2009:106). Part of the missionary’s plan was that a tannery and a mill were erected and successful animal husbandry practices ensured good numbers of stock and the profit according to Bilbe (2009:110) was used for expansion and development Bible (2009:113) records that on 31 October 1842 three wagons filled with products, oranges, tobacco, dried fruits, hats and leather products, left Wupperthal for trading in the Roggeveld.

William Carey, the father of modern missions, who spent forty years in India, translated the Scriptures into thirty-five languages and dialects of India and Southeast Asia serve as an example of the outstanding work missionaries have contributed to the development of humans and their economic conditions (Kane 1987:98). It was the church through the mission work of David Livingstone, according to Kane (1987:100), who exposed the Arab slave trade as “ the open sore of the world” and managed to “ open a path for commerce and

Christianity” in the then rather unknown continent.

The mission work of the church through its missionaries of the nineteenth century stands out to Kane (1987:100) as they attacked the social evils of their time that included child marriage, the immolation of widows, opium addiction, the slave trade and polygamy. In all parts of the world missionaries opened schools, hospitals, clinics, medical colleges, and orphanages (Kane 1987:100,168, 172). Most African Christians are products of missionary theological traditions that came to us incorporating a variety of development activities such as education, hospitals and agriculture.

Tsele (2001:208) reason that even though these traditions, as mentioned here later, were largely taken over by governments as countries and communities won their struggles for political and economic independence, the church in her missional task often continues to be active in development work. This view of the church finds support by Koegelenberg (1992:3) in that he states that the church takes development seriously because God takes the pain, the poverty, our redemption and the suffering in this world seriously. The churches are involved in development work because they are primarily involved with the poor as the church is found in the most remote parts of our country doing ministry according to Tsele (2001:2213). At great risk to themselves and their families missionaries fought famines, floods, pestilences, and risked the education of women (Kane 1987:100). All walks of life were included in the gospel invitation including rich and poor, young and old, soldiers and slaves, tribal chiefs and medicine men, as Kane (1987:171), draw our attention to the development work by missionaries.

#### **4.5 Contemporary Views on the Role of the Church and Economic Development**

Fernandes (1970:232) cautions us with his view when he states that the question of economic development must be understood not only as a war on want or the elimination of destitution, but in the wider context of the restitution of human dignity to all persons everywhere and of social justice on the international plain. These are values, according to Fernandes (1970:232), the Church prizes dearly and should foster in every way possible.

The views of Rieger (2009:155), Villa Vicencio (1992:218) and Fernandes (1970:232), seems to suggest that it is inevitable for the church is to be involved in economic development, as it is understood to be part of the mandate and obligation to conserve and to develop humankind to the glory of God.

Our experience in reality is that the cost-of-living raises steeply, not in consumer durables, but in the things that hit the poor in areas like food, rent, light and fuel, and many people might not even refrigerators. The question asked by Fernandes (1970: 226) in reference to the economic development of people, is: "What can the Church do? What more can the church do to show herself once again untiringly as educator and inspirer of the indispensable effort to resolve an intolerable situation, an insult flung in the face of humanity?" Fernandes (1970:226) argues that till recently the Churches left such issues as economic development to the Government and to the secular citizen as their exclusive concern, the "spiritual", was largely unrelated to the "material" needs of man. Generally speaking it seems that the church has been associated in the popular mind, according to Sethi (1995:864), with prayer, charity and services, but having little interest in economic pressures, development and confronting economic policies. Sethi however bring a view to the debate that suggests that the church has always related herself to her social and political context (Sethi 1995:864). Today we have reached a point where at least two thirds of the world's population are either dying of hunger or living on or below the poverty line as well as being subsequently excluded from the formal economy (Duchrow 1998: 231). For this reason Duchrow (1998:231) finds it of utmost importance that the focus of the economy be shifted from money accumulation to the people's needs.

Fernandes (1970:229,231) states, that it can hardly be denied that the Church should be interested, concerned and even involved in the central problem of our age, in this movement stemming from the aspirations of people to find a better life and their implicit faith in man's ability to grapple with the challenge.

As part of the World Bank study on poverty in the twenty-first century, a consultation was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, where the major areas of debate were poverty measurement and definition, it was revealing according to Tsele (2001:210) that among economists, cultural anthropologists and sociologists alike there was agreement that any measurement and definition that does not include the religious dimension is inadequate. This theoretical shift, Tsele (2001:210) views as very significant for the church, since it legitimizes the role of the church in development. This view would probably also offer an answer to Fernandes' question as to whether the church has a role to play in the economic development field.

Introducing the religious dimension in economic development, according to Tsele (2001:211,212), refocuses the problem and thus lays the basis for addressing the economic

development challenges adequately by the church as one of the role players. August (2010:55) reminds us that the issues of development and of cause economic development transcends the boundaries of the established churches and, in his view, development has given birth to a new form of Christian unity in the world.

One of the most tragic conditions mentioned by Max-Neef (1991:11), for which humanity as a whole should feel pain as well as shame, is that we have managed to construct a world, as has been pointed out by UNICEF, where the majority of the poor are children. This situation inevitably calls for the church to be involved as the church is in some respects more like a family than like an industry, for in it love and concern rather than economic self-interest are determinative (Dulles 1984:73). Churches, according to Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:205), can be forceful actors in civil society, once they work together as a role player with social movements when challenges like economic development needs to be addressed. In consulting Bonhoeffer, Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:209) strengthens their argument in that with Bonhoeffer they agree that the Church must wrestle with giving visible witness to Christ in real-life situations. The churches, acting ecumenically, according to Duchrow and Hinkelammert (2004:223), can help to replace if needs be, the destructive “economic horror” by a commitment of property to life and thereby a life-enhancing economy.

Fernandes (1970:239) argues that the church does not have a blueprint for economic development as it is not the mission of the church to propose concrete solutions to the problems of development but if it is to *co-operate in finding the solution to the out-standing problems of our time*, then, unquestionably, there is need of strategic thought and action.

In light of the views mentioned, it seems clear that the church has credibility amongst people at grass roots level as well as in other sectors, like government, according to Cloete (2009:89) Cloete (2009:89) therefore argue that from this general view arises the expectation that the church must play a role in our long awaited, but challenging democratic society.

In light of the above, the attempt of the following part of the chapter will be to explore literature that states the position of the Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Reformers, Pentecostals and the World Council of Churches on economic development.

#### **4.5.1 The Roman Catholic Church and Economic Development with special reference to the Southern African Bishops’ Conference**

Amongst many scholars, like Kane (1987:57), it is believed that the Roman Catholic Church is by far the oldest, largest and most influential organization in the world with more than its

half billion members based almost worldwide. The development of Roman Catholic missions coincided with the expansion of the overseas empires of Portugal and Spain, the Cape Verde Islands (1450), India in 1498 and Brazil in 1500 (Kane (1987:57). As time went on and Catholic missions extended to all parts of the world a central seminary in Rome, the College of Propaganda, was established to train native clergy from all parts of the mission world (Kane 1987:58). Kane (1987:58) notes that this church could deploy its army of servants to any part of the habitable globe because of the vows of obedience and celibacy taken by dedicated members.

The Catholic Church is a hierarchical institution with the supreme pontiff holding the Holy See of Rome which means that the Pope can speak with authority on issues of faith and morals as well as issues that directly affect the welfare of the church and development (Clarke 2011:114). Clarke (2011:114) indicates that a historical analysis of papal encyclicals since 1891 reveals a trajectory towards a preferential option for the poor in the Church's social teaching. This, in the view of Clarke (2011:131), means that the Catholic Church is committed to be the Church of the poor with a focus on integral human development, which must include both spiritual growth and material growth.

#### **4.5.1.1 The Roman Catholic view on Economic Development**

The view of the Catholic Church on the role of the church in economic development gets expression in the presentation given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 29 June 2009, the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, in the year 2009, the fifth of my Pontificate, by Pope Benedict XVI. The views shared by the Pope will serve as a summary as to view the position of the Catholic Church as stated below.

Pope Benedict XVI, in the Encyclical Letter, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), states that the Church does not have technical solutions to offer and does not claim to interfere in any way in the politics of states. She does, however, have a mission of truth to accomplish, in every time and circumstance, for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity, to his vocation. In reflecting on Pope Paul VI's view on economic development, Pope Benedict XVI (2009) states that Pope Paul VI had an *articulated vision of development*. He understood the term to indicate the goal of rescuing peoples, first and foremost, from hunger, deprivation, endemic diseases and illiteracy. From the economic point of view, this meant their active participation in the international economic process; from the social point of view, it meant their evolution

into educated societies marked by solidarity; from the political point of view, it meant the consolidation of democratic regimes capable of ensuring freedom and peace. The economic development that Paul VI hoped to see was meant to produce real growth that benefits everyone and is genuinely sustainable (Pope Benedict XVI: 2009). This form of economic development in view of Pope Paul VI, as understood by Clarke (2011:118), is seen as involving escaping from destitution, eliminating social evils, increasing knowledge, attaining culture, developing greater respect for the dignity of others, cooperation for the common good and having a will for peace. It is true that growth has taken place, and it continues to be a positive factor that has lifted billions of people out of misery. Attention is however drawn to the fact that it must be acknowledged that this same economic growth has been and continues to be weighed down by *malfunctions and dramatic problems*, highlighted even further by the current crisis (Pope Benedict XVI:2009). The current crisis, in view of Pope Benedict XVI (2009) obliges the church to re-plan our journey, to set ourselves new rules and to discover new forms of commitment, to build on positive experiences and to reject negative ones. The crisis thus becomes *an opportunity for discernment, in which to shape a new vision for the future*. In this spirit, with confidence rather than resignation, it is appropriate to address the difficulties of the present time (Pope Benedict XVI: 2009).

No consideration of the problems associated with economic development could fail to highlight the direct link between poverty and unemployment (Pope Benedict XVI: 2009). In many cases according to Pope Benedict XVI: (2009), poverty results from a *violation of the dignity of human work*, either because work opportunities are limited (through unemployment or underemployment), or because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it. For this reason, on 1 May 2000 on the occasion of the Jubilee of Workers, Pope John Paul II issued an appeal for a global coalition in favor of decent work, supporting the strategy of the International Labor Organization (Pope Benedict XVI:2009). According to Pope Benedict XVI (2009), development needs above all to be true and integral. He further argues that the mere fact that development emerges from economic backwardness, though positive in itself, does not resolve the complex issues of human advancement, neither for the countries that are spearheading such progress, nor for those that are already economically developed, nor even for those that are still poor, which can suffer not just through old forms of exploitation, but also from the negative consequences of a growth that is marked by irregularities and imbalances. This fact should prompt us to liberate ourselves from ideologies, which often



oversimplify reality in artificial ways, and it should lead us to examine objectively the full human dimension of the problems ( Pope Benedict XVI:2009).

Attention is drawn to the fact that economic activity cannot solve all social problems through the simple application of *commercial logic* (Pope Benedict XVI 2009). This needs to be directed towards the pursuit of the common good, for which the political community in particular must also take responsibility. Pope Benedict XVI (2009) calls on the church to be mindful of the fact that grave imbalances are produced when economic action, conceived merely as an engine for wealth creation, is detached from political action, conceived as a means for pursuing justice through redistribution. In rich countries, new sectors of society are succumbing to poverty and new forms of poverty are emerging. In poorer areas some groups enjoy a sort of superdevelopment of a wasteful and consumerist kind which forms an unacceptable contrast with the ongoing situations of dehumanizing deprivation (Pope Benedict XVI: 2009). Corruption and illegality are unfortunately evident in the conduct of the economic and political class in rich countries, both old and new, as well as in poor ones (Pope Benedict XVI: 2009). As noted by Pope Benedict XVI (2009), economy and finance, as instruments, can be used badly when those at the helm are motivated toward purely selfish ends.

The great challenge before us, accentuated by the problems of economic development in this global era and made even more urgent by the economic and financial crisis, is to demonstrate, in thinking and behaviour, not only that traditional principles of social ethics like transparency, honesty and responsibility cannot be ignored , but also that in commercial relationships the principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must find their place within normal economic activity (Pope Benedict XVI :2009). This is a human demand at the present time, but Pope Benedict XVI (2009) calls on the church to realise that is also demanded by economic logic. The Church's social doctrine, according to Pope Benedict XVI (2009), has always maintained that justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity, because this is always concerned with man and his needs. Locating resources, financing, production, consumption and all the other phases in the economic cycle inevitably have moral implications and moral consequences (Pope Benedict XVI: 2009).



Based on the above view, Pope Benedict XVI (2009) reckons that economic life undoubtedly requires *contracts*, in order to regulate relations of exchange between goods of equivalent value. He further suggests that it also needs *just laws* and *forms of redistribution* governed by politics, and what is more, it needs works redolent of the spirit of gift. The approach of Pope Benedict XVI (2009) in the search for solutions to the current economic crisis is one that accepts that development aid for poor countries must be considered a valid means of creating wealth for all. From this perspective, Pope Benedict XVI (2009) argues that more economically developed nations should do all they can to allocate larger portions of their gross domestic product to development aid, thus respecting the obligations that the international community has undertaken in this regard.

#### **4.5.1.1.2 The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC)**

Over the past century, the Catholic Church has spoken against unjust and oppressive economic doctrines (Clarke 2011:130). Work, in view of the Catholic Church, as stated in the SACBC 1999 (1999:21), on economic justice is a vital part of our humanity and a basic human right.

The Church's duty, and that of every Christian, as stated in the SACBC 1999 (1999:46) is to continue to help in bringing about the reign of God here and now in our earthly reality, that is why the Catholic Bishops and the church must speak out against anything which prevent any of God's people from enjoying life to the full, which would naturally include the economic development of the people. The values referred to by this report is those of truth, justice and love that compels them to speak out against injustice of whatever kind, in which ever sphere of life it is found ( SACBC 1993:3). The Catholic Church's view according to this report (1999:3) clearly states that the Roman Catholic Church has a sacred duty to preach the Good News and to spread the values of the Gospel. According to the SACBC Report (1999:5), the bishops believe that at the heart of every economic system lie human needs, human abilities and human decisions that determine the justice or injustice of the economic system.

The Catholic Church (SACBC report of 1993, 1999:4) is deeply concerned about all aspects of human life and strives to promote not only spiritual, but also social, cultural, political and economic development of all people. One of the main tasks, for instance, of the economy, according to the SACBC of 1999 (1999:7) is to ensure that there are enough jobs, or

opportunities to work in order to meet people's needs. The view of the Catholic church according to the SACBC 1999 (1999:20), is that one of the main reasons for the high rates of poverty in South Africa, is the failure of the economy to provide sufficient jobs or then to provide economic development to the people. The harm caused by unemployment and the lack of economic development contributes to the distressingly high incidences of crime, family breakdown, domestic violence, gangsterism and drug and alcohol abuse which beset the South African society (SACBC 1999 1999:21). If the church is not involved in the issues that affect the day-to-day lives of the people of God, as stated by this report (1999:4), the church would be failing in their duty of being faithful to the Gospel of Jesus. The Catholic Church is committed to the struggle of the poor, the oppressed, those living on the margins of the community, those whose interests have been neglected or ignored and to economic development. It is this commitment which the Church calls the "preferential option for the poor", that in practice means that the economic actions and decisions must not only avoid harming the interests of the poor, but must actually contribute to their upliftment (SACBC 1999:13). The SACBC Plenary Session of 1972 (1981:13) as well as the SACBC open letter to the Government on 23 August 1976 (1981:80) in addressing the work and economic situation in South Africa, stated clearly that the Church has a serious duty to champion the rights of the masses to a living wage that will enable families to live above the poverty datum line. The SACBC of 1999 (1999:11) takes the position that an economic structure based on racism or which perpetuates third-world debt is sinful and those who benefit from such structures are tainted by that sin and bear a responsibility for the suffering that inevitably flows from sin.

With reference to the 1976 Soweto unrest, the SACBC (1977:41) stated that the church is on the side of the oppressed and the Bishops have committed themselves to work within the church for a clearer expression of solidarity with the poor and deprived. An open letter was written to the South African Government by the SACBC on 23 August 1976 (SACBC 1981:79) where it was stated by the Bishops that all people should be allowed to have a decent family life, and this would require the abolition of the Migratory labour system so that people can live as families and enjoy their economic life as a family. The open letter further states that the Government should provide people with adequate housing in areas which are properly served with good roads as well as with sufficient playing areas for the children (1981:79). The Bishops (1981:79,80) demanded that transport facilities and hours of work

should be such that the parents have sufficient time to spend with their family as people are free to move to areas of their choice. In terms of job reservations, the Bishops in the letter (1976:80) demanded that the reservation of work to certain population groups should be abolished and be replaced by a system in which exploitation and unfair competition is prevented. In concluding the letter the Bishops have as foundation for their arguments the fact that the Government claims to love God, but there can be no true love of God, where there is no love of fellow human beings and neglect of creating economic development opportunities in order to assist with a sustained living.

Economic decisions must always take into account the interests of the people who will be affected by those decisions, that is why the Catholic Church teaches that labour – meaning workers and management – must enjoy priority over capital (SACBC 1999:15).

In evaluating the South African Government's economic development program called the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), the SACBC 1999 (1999:34) states that this program failed to meet its targets – in economic growth and in job-creation.

The SACBC 1999 (1999:37) urged business to find ways of preserving and expanding existing employment levels, co-operate with government in pursuing job-creation as well as providing adequate training in the workplace .

Where particular economic policies or practices have an adverse effect on people, the Church according to SACBC 1999 (1999:33) is obliged to criticise them, and where possible, to suggest alternatives.

The evolution of the Catholic Church's teaching on development as viewed by Clarke (2011:132) has resulted in there now being an explicit recognition that integral human development is required in both poor and wealthy countries, wherever the poor are oppressed and excluded.

#### **4.5.2 The Reformed tradition and the Role of the Church in Economic Development**

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) was born through an historic merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) in June 2010. Delegates meeting 18-28 June in Grand Rapids, United States,

launched a landmark effort to unite Christians for common witness and service to the world. The World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) brings together 80 million Reformed Christians worldwide - united in a commitment to making a difference on the big issues of our day - climate change, human rights, economic justice and helping our neighbors of all faiths ([www.wcrc.ch](http://www.wcrc.ch)).

Its 230 member churches in 108 countries are Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed and United churches with roots in the 16th-century Reformation led by John Calvin, John Knox and others with its secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland ([www.wcrc.ch](http://www.wcrc.ch)).

#### **4.5.2.1 Justice in the Economy, the Earth and for all God's Creation**

Social and economic justice, human dignity and concern for creation were significant focus for the Swiss reformer, John Calvin, whose theological perspectives were based on the principle of the sovereignty of God in all spheres of life, including commitment to faithful living and affirmation of the regulation of life according to God's will ([www.wcrc.ch](http://www.wcrc.ch)). A major challenge for the ecumenical movement is to find ways on how to live faithfully in times of economic injustice, lack of economic development opportunities and climate change. Justice in the economy, the earth and for all of God's creation remains a priority concern for Reformed Christians as a crucial life and justice issue ([www.wcrc.ch](http://www.wcrc.ch)).

The position of the WCRC, on its role in economic development issues is captured on its website ([www.wcrc.ch](http://www.wcrc.ch)), as pointed out below:

The WCRC builds on the Covenanting for Justice Process and the [Accra Confession](#) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. In 2004 when WARC member churches gathered for the its 24th General Council in Accra Ghana, a defining moment came when delegates boldly declared that working to create a just economy is essential to the integrity of Christian faith. The statement made at Accra was profound in terms of the position of the reformers: "We believe that the integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the current system of neoliberal economic globalization." The Accra Confession proclaims that justice for life is a confessional subject, "not meaning a classical doctrinal confession... but to show the necessity and the urgency of an active response to the challenges of our time and the call of Debrecen". (Accra Confession paragraph 15)

The WCRC is committed to the joint initiative of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches,

the Council for World Mission (CWM) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) covenanting for justice movement, called Oikotree. Oikotree is an ecumenical movement that put justice at the heart of faith. It would like to include people who seek to live faithfully in the midst of economic injustice and ecological destruction. Oikotree call on empires that can raise their voices and demonstrate their actions for alternatives to the current unjust systems. It builds on the WARC Covenanting for Justice, the WCC AGAPE and the CWM justice and mission.

#### **4.5.2.2 The program direction of WCRC includes the following:**

- Developing and promoting life-giving civilization as an alternative to the neo-liberal economic paradigm, introducing new metrics that reflect God's intention for the flourishing of creation, and humankind within creation, that will include engaging the powers in the world economic system.
- Developing a framework and criteria for a new international financial and economic architecture.
- Establishing a global ecumenical panel, linking to initiatives with other faith communities and critical experts worldwide as well as with the UN expert commission for a new world economic and financial architecture, headed by the Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz.”
- Establishing an international core group, including, feminist theologians, pastors, economists and climate change experts to develop a process to support churches' engagement on economic and climate justice issues from critical gender perspectives.
- Living out the Accra Confession – through education on climate justice, ecological debt and ecological destruction.
- Building up the Oikotree movement and connecting the Reformed family with this initiative.

#### **4.5.3 The Lutheran Church and Economic Development**

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. Founded in 1947 in Lund, Sweden, the LWF now has 140 member churches in 79 countries all over the world representing over 70 million Christians worldwide ([www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)). The view of the LWF on economic development issues is stated on

their website ([www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)) and some overview is given below:

The LWF acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of common interest such as ecumenical and interfaith relations, theology, humanitarian assistance, international affairs and human rights, communication, and mission and development. It furthers, worldwide, among the member churches diaconic action, alleviation of human need, promotion of peace and human rights, social and economic justice, care for God's creation and sharing of resources. Development activities undertaken by member churches are supported through the LWF Department for Mission and Development.

The LWF Department for World Service, as the internationally recognized humanitarian and development arm of the Lutheran World Federation provides humanitarian aid and assists in rehabilitation and development in almost 40 countries. World Service works with marginalized and disadvantaged communities in the areas of greatest vulnerability and endemic need.

World Service co-operates closely with churches and related agencies as an instrument of the ecumenical movement. With programs in Africa, Asia, Latin and Central America, and Europe, World Service has a distinguished record of linking compassionate and professional emergency response with competence in rehabilitation programs and effective long-term development efforts ([www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)). World Service reaches out to marginalize and vulnerable poor people whose livelihoods are threatened by the effects of natural and human-made disaster, with special regard to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Through its office for International Affairs and Human Rights, the LWF supports its member churches and development programs with global advocacy.

#### **4.5.3.1 The LWF *Consultation on Poverty and the Mission of the Church in Africa* held September 2006 in Arusha, Tanzania, focused on:**

- Furthering the understanding of poverty trends in Africa and their perpetuating factors
- Further clarifying the church's self-understanding, mission and diaconal task in the context of poverty in Africa
- Identifying strategies and concrete ways for the churches to engage the challenges of poverty in Africa
- Empowering churches to work together in pursuit of an "economy that serves life."

Being the church in Africa today is not only a privilege but also an obligation, according to the Arusha Consultation participants. The *Arusha Action Plan* details specific steps that are to be taken to meet this commitment ([www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)).

On 20 August 1999 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America held their sixth Church wide Assembly where they made confessions and made commitments as a demonstration of their realization as to what role the Lutheran Church can play in economic development. Some of the views that were captured by the Department for Studies of the Division for Church Society in Illinois is reflected on below:

Through human decisions and actions, God is at work in economic life. Economic life is intended to be a means through which God's purposes for humankind and creation are to be served. When this does not occur, as a church we cannot remain silent because of who and whose we are. We should assess economic activities in terms of how they affect "all," especially people living in poverty. In relation to those who are poor, Martin Luther's insights into the meaning of the commandments against killing, stealing, and coveting are sobering. We violate "you shall not kill" when we do not help and support others to meet their basic needs. Developing countries that have opened their economies to global markets have generally reduced poverty over time more than those that have not, but the terms of trade often work to the disadvantage of developing countries ([www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)). Seeking more just exchanges "for all" through investment and trade is a significant challenge. The danger is that less developed parts of the world, or less powerful groups within a country, will be exploited or excluded from participation in global markets ([www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)).

Christians are sent forth into the world to bear witness to God's promised reign. The world is the whole household of God that economic life is intended to serve. The Spirit of God expands our vision and transforms our priorities. The church realizes that Christians do not eat alone; everyone needs to eat. The multitudes present around God's global table become our neighbors rather than competitors or strangers. Empowered by God, we continue to act, pray, and hope that through economic life there truly will be *sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all*.

Through broad-based community organizing people can be mobilized to address economic and other issues that directly impact them. Government and the private sector also must invest in health, education, and infrastructures necessary for sustainable development. When people

and resources are connected in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness, this will help bring about productive results and meaningful participation in community and economic life.

Therefore, LWR commit itself as a church and urge members to:

- learn about, participate in, and provide financial support for community economic development and organizing strategies that enhance the current and future well-being of communities and the environment;
- support community development corporations and locally-owned or producer-owned cooperatives;
- integrate social values into our investment decisions, and invest more in socially responsible companies and funds that sustain businesses as well as workers, consumers, the environment, and low-income communities.

They call for:

Support of the above strategies by governments, financial institutions, and the wider society; alternatives to gambling as a means of community economic development; grants and low-interest loans that enable small companies and farms to get started, develop, and expand in order to provide livelihood for more people in low-income communities.

#### **4.5.4 The World Council of Churches and the Role of the Church in Economic Development**

As indicated in ecumenical literature, ecclesiastical concern with issues of development took off after the World Council of Churches' World Conference on Church and Society in 1966 (Swart 2006:1). Swart (2006:2), further states that over a period of three to four years, a relatively small amount of writers contributed to the role of the church in the development debate.

Brubaker (2007:15) draws our attention to the World Conference on Church and Society: Christians in the Technical and Social Revolutions of Our Time (Geneva, 1966), as the third ecumenical conference called to address "the questions of Church and Society". Unlike the first two - Stockholm, 1925 and Oxford, 1937; Geneva 1966 included a significant representation (almost half) from the churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The conference definition of economic development, as noted by Brubaker (2007:15), from the



report of Section I - "Economic Development in a World Perspective," states that:

Economic development is essentially a process of change whose fundamental aim is to improve the living conditions of all the people in a country. Such change is brought about by measures to increase productivity, usually through increased investment, sustained over a period of time. This definition, according to Brubaker (2007:16), does link development to social justice as well as charges Christian theology with the task of expounding and defending "the human" as a criterion for judging economic and social changes. The conference made Brubaker (2007:16) to understand that the churches are to "welcome economic growth because it helps to free men and women from unnecessary want and economic insecurity".

Pope Paul has called "development" the new name for "peace", and the statement of the 1966 Conference on Church and Society hailed it as the fundamental human concern of our time, comments Fernandes (1970: 231). Fernandes (1970:321) further argues that the Church is concerned with economic development because economic development is a part of human development; "man is the source, the centre, and the purpose of all economic and social life". Building the earthly city provides the conditions for the full development of the human person. It includes a certain sufficiency of material goods, the development of human freedom and dignity and the progressive growth of human solidarity.

After studying the World Council of Churches' view on the role of the church, Hay (1994: 157) understands it to be, amongst others, one that urges the Church and her members to continuously search and examine their lifestyles, priorities, structures and involvement, directly and indirectly, in economic life in the light of the Christian vision of economic justice. Hay (1994:157) is of the opinion that the church need to take a prophetic position in identifying economic injustice, offering alternative visions for economic life, engaging in advocacy, have empowerment ministries, organizing the poor and oppressed to exercise countervailing power to the forces that are oppressing them, otherwise the church will have no right to address secular authorities. Evaluating the Oxford Declaration, the WCC Study Document and the Centesimus Annus, Hay (1994: 159) discovered amongst others that the three documents demonstrate a considerable agreement that economic and political life is a legitimate sphere of involvement for the church.

At a summit for social development in Copenhagen in March 1995 Raiser, (1995:385) states that since its beginning, the WCC has been an advocate of Christian involvement in the

struggle for social justice, based on the conviction that we cannot separate the material and spiritual needs of individuals and communities. He further argued that it was out of this conviction that the WCC actively promoted the formation of the United Nations as an instrument not just of sovereign states, but as the embodiment of the aspirations of the peoples of the world for peace, respect for human rights, including religious liberty and freedom from want (Raiser 1995:385). The concern that Raiser (1995:385,386) raised in his address was who is responsible to safeguard the rights of poor nations and the small states in the face of the domination of a handful of powerful actors on the world economic scene, if it is argued that economic growth is absolutely necessary to eradicate poverty, then why has it not done so during decades of growth-oriented development strategies? An alternative approach by Raiser (1995:386) that requires from the outset the participation in decision-making processes of those who are affected by decisions on policies around poverty reduction, long-term employment generation and environmental restoration might just be necessary for sustainable human and economic development. This approach can be seen as a building-up rather than a trickle-down approach, starting with the needs of local communities and using these as the basis for global politics as being practiced by the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society which as stated by Raiser (1995:386), gives loans to commercially viable enterprises which comply with a set of social objectives.

An initiative that emerged from the WCC assembly held in Uppsala in 1968 laid down the basis for the Commission on Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD), founded in 1970 with its main task to promote ecumenical reflection and action on development (Drimmelen 2000:432). The major ingredients of an ecumenical understanding of development, as noted by van Drimmelen (2000:432), was social justice, people's participation, self-reliance and economic growth aimed at fulfilling basic needs. The Ecumenical Development Fund was established as an important instrument for the promotion of Churches Participation in Development and, according to van Drimmelen (2000:432), churches were asked to donate 2% of their annual budget to this fund. From this basis **Oikocredits** was formed with a dual purpose: first, it was to work with the poor in their efforts to achieve self-reliance through productive enterprises, by providing loans, guarantees or investment capital; and second, it was to mobilize investment capital of the churches and church-related organisations to be used for human and economic development (van Drimmelen 2000:432).

The consequential result for van Drimmelen (2000:432,433) was that this would not only benefit the poor but would also enhance the system, demonstrating that an enterprise can operate on Christian principles, work with the poor and yet be self-sustaining.

**4.5.4.1. The criteria for its lending operations by Oikocredits as stated by van Drimmelen (Ecumenical Review 2000:434,435) are the following:**

- The enterprise benefits poor and disadvantaged people;
- The earnings of the project are widely shared and do not enrich a few organizers or investors;
- The project contributes to the social and economic advancement of the wider community in which it is located; special attention is paid to the ecological impact;
- The enterprise is financially viable and will become self-sustaining within a reasonable period of time so that the involvement of Oikocredits can be phased out; appropriate management skills and technological expertise are necessary ;
- There is need for foreign investment; government rules and regulations should allow for such investment on terms which are beneficial to the project.

The concluding view of van Drimmelen (2000:441) is that although Oikocredits as a micro finance organisation, seems like a drop in the ocean when compared to the more than one trillion dollars which are daily traded on the world's capital markets, yet for the estimated 16 million poor who use the services of micro finance institutions, it has changed their lives to the better through the involvement of the church as part of her role in economic development.

**4.5.5 Pentecostalism and Economic Development**

The Pentecostal World Conference (PWC) or Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) is a fellowship of Pentecostal believers and denominations from across the world. The *Pentecostal World Conference* meets every three years, as stated on their website ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostal\\_World\\_Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostal_World_Conference)). Pentecostal organizations that subscribe to the PWC Statement of Faith may apply for membership, which is subject to the approval of the Advisory Committee of the *Pentecostal World Fellowship*.

The first conference was held in 1947 at Zürich, Switzerland. This meeting was organized by Swiss pastor Leonard Steiner, who was assisted by David du Plessis. Since then, the Conference has met at Paris, France (1949); London, England (1952); Stockholm, Sweden

(1955); Toronto, Ontario (1958); Jerusalem, Israel (1961); Helsinki, Finland (1964); Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1967); Dallas, Texas (1970); Seoul, Korea (1973); London, England (1976); Vancouver, British Columbia (1979); Nairobi, Kenya (1982); Zurich, Switzerland (1985); Singapore (1989); Oslo, Norway (1992); Jerusalem, Israel (1995), Seoul, Korea (1998), and Los Angeles, California (2001). The Los Angeles meeting was convened in celebration of the Azusa Street Revival. The 20th Conference met at Johannesburg, South Africa in 2004.

We get insight in one of the Pentecostal views on the role of the church in economic development when we reflect on what Zalanga, in *Journal of the Third World*, contribute to the debate as mentioned below:

It is theologically believed in Pentecostal circles, according to Zalanga (2010: 47), that the Holy Spirit operates best when and where the name of God is glorified through praise and worship, among other things. The emphasis on singing praise and worship songs has revitalized the music industry as a means of cultural expression. Zalanga (2010; 47) notes that there are many Christian music artists that have emerged, excelled, and prospered because of their ability to produce and sell praise and worship songs and this in itself is a form of economic development orchestrated by the church. It has also been documented, according to Zalanga (2010:48) that regular and active participation in the activities of Pentecostal churches impart managerial, organizational, and middle class virtues among the members. The importance of being exposed to and acquiring these virtues, Zalanga (2010;47) argue, is particularly important for members of the church that originate from rural, peasant, and non-middle class backgrounds because he reasons that such people need to learn numerous soft skills that are critical for working productively in a modern bureaucratic organization. They learn specific skills such as proper ways of communicating, marketing and publicity, coordinating work at both horizontal and vertical levels, and setting goals and devising strategies for achieving them which, in the view of Zalanga (2010; 48), can be seen as economic development. These positive learning experiences in the church for spiritual growth purposes spill over into other facets of their lives (e.g., work). It would make sense to argue that such people are good materials for employment because they have learned to make commitments to their organizational goals and missions, rather than the desire to only make profits without commitment to the mission of the organization.

One important role of Pentecostalism that is emphasized by Zalanga (2010; 49) in this context

is that it has constituted itself into a source for the hopeless people to revive their original but abandoned dreams and aspirations. By stressing Pentecostal power, which is a force that is over and above the more or less dictatorial and corrupt political institution in a country, Pentecostalism is empowering the hitherto hopeless (Zalanga World 2010:50).

Thus, Pentecostal churches becomes places and centers where people can get access and tap into resources that transform them from a state of irrelevance to one of active participants in the process of recreating themselves (Zalanga 2010; 50). Some argue that such people are being stabilized by being made to internalize norms and values that regulate their acquisitive tendencies. Pentecostal churches in some respects help young people to achieve freedom from the traditional gerontocracy in Africa. In the area of marriage, for instance, young people can marry someone they love and not someone the extended family has forced on them (i.e., arranged marriage) by emphasizing achievement orientation and the need for hard work and perseverance (Zalanga 2010:50).

Pentecostalism is helping many of its followers to achieve social mobility. Zalanga (2010; 50) gives examples as mentioned below, for his position that the theology of how Pentecostals understand it helps them with social mobility, for instance, Pentecostals are committed to not giving bribes in order to get something. Young ladies who are born again would not consent to any sexual relations with 'sugar daddies' or their bosses in order to earn money or favor. Instead, they are encouraged to honor Christ by maintaining their integrity in the belief that he would honor their commitment in the area of gender inequality, in a significant respect, women are provided the opportunity to occupy leadership roles in the church in a society that is decisively patriarchal (Zalanga 2010:50). By working side by side with men in committees, having equal voting rights, and sometimes leading committees in the church themselves, women acquire a new social status that is a Conventional wisdom it that Pentecostalism is either of minimal benefit to the poor or it retards their economic development.

According to the sociologist, Schlemmer, Pentecostals deserve more credit for South Africa's recent socio-economic success than more celebrated programs like black-empowerment policy and affirmative action, as he highlights some of his findings. This point was stressed by Schlemmer at a conference on Media and Religion for journalists at the Oxford Centre in Johannesburg in 2010 (The Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life: 2010). One of his

findings was that Pentecostal churches move more people up the lifestyle ladder even more quickly. The secret, he says, seems to be in the “flavour of self-reliance” and overall optimism that Pentecostal theology produces in its adherents. A religious package that includes stern moral values and ascetic lifestyles results in Pentecostals who are better-than-average employees, Schlemmer found. Financial habits such as tithing to the local church encourage families to take care with money. The result is collective economic progress that outpaces other groups with similar starting points. Conventional wisdom has it that Pentecostalism is either of minimal benefit to the poor or it retards their economic development, but Schlemmer found that Pentecostals do want to improve themselves and their communities, and they are succeeding.

Media fail to report this positive side of Pentecostalism, said Schlemmer, because they aren’t looking for it. And even if they were, they might not see it, he says, since media are “singularly blind” to religion.

#### **4.6 The Physical Environment of the Rhenish Church within the Western Cape**

Cape Town is the main urban centre of the Western Cape. The population of Cape Town increased by 1, 6 per cent annually from 2,994 million to 3,239 million people (65, 0% of the Western Cape population) in the period 2001-2006 according to the socio-economic profile of the City of Cape Town (<http://www.capetown.gov.za> 2006: 3). The population is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 1, 0 per cent for the period 2006-2010 to 3,368 million people by 2010. By 2014, the population is projected to grow to 3,448 million at an average annual growth rate of 0, 6 per cent. Cape Town’s population as a proportion of the total Western Cape population is projected to remain stable at 65,0 per cent in 2010 and 2014.

The City of Cape Town, one of South Africa’s five metropolitan municipalities, has a relatively simple legislative structure and is classified as a Category A municipality. The region is defined as a high capacity functional municipality. It is positioned on the southern peninsula of the Western Cape Province covering a geographical area of 2 479 km. Cape Town is largely regarded as the economic heartbeat of the Western Cape Province, accounting for 76,5 per cent of the province’s economic activity, with key economic indicators underpinning the performance of the province. The main drivers of economic growth are Finance & Business Services, Manufacturing, and Wholesale & Retail Trade sectors. A large number of financial head offices are located in the City, and as a result the

Finance & Business Services sector has grown consistently for the period 1995-2004. The sector also utilises the City's skills base in the 'First Economy'.

The demography of Cape Town is similar, in terms of urban concentration trends, to that of the remaining four metropolitan municipalities across the country. Two distinct economies are evident, namely, the first and second economies. The first economy is characterised by a well structured environment catering for the affluent segment of the population, while the second economy is characterised by under-development, operating in the midst of poverty. Some of the key challenges for the City are poverty, housing backlogs, health issues and crime. Informal settlements and backyard hacks are expanding. This highlights the shortage of low cost housing and the housing backlog which is estimated at 265 000 units.

HIV/Aids and TB infections are prevalent in the poorest communities (Khayelitsha & Nyanga) with infection rates on par with the rest of the country. However, in general the infection rates for the City are considerably lower when compared with the rest of the country.

Crime is a potential deterrent to investment flows into the municipality. There has been a significant increase in drug-related crime from 249,8 to 511,8 (per 100 000 people) between 2001/2 and 2004/5.<sup>2</sup> These figures may have consequences for economic growth and social development.

According to the profile of the City of Cape Town's socio-economic report of 2006 the statistics (<http://www.capetown.gov.za>) is as follows:

#### **4.6.1 Socio-economic indicators of Cape Town – Western Cape**

- Unemployment rate 2004 23,40% 18,6%
- Number of unemployed 2004 275,730 387,000
- Proportion of households with no income (2001) 13,31% 12,06%
- Number of households with no income (2001) 102,062 145,768

*(Source: Statistics South Africa; Census 2001, LFS 2004)*

The City Development Index (CDI) is an average of the following indices: infrastructure<sup>12</sup>, health<sup>13</sup>, education<sup>14</sup> and income<sup>15</sup>. Overall, the City has a higher CDI of 0,88 compared to 0,81 for the rest of the Western Cape Province.

The extent of development/under-development differs from area to area. The facts show the



state of development in selected areas in Cape Town. Khayelitsha, Nyanga, Langa, Gugulethu, Mitchell's Plain and Elsies River are evidently the poorest areas with CDI's that are below the provincial average of 0,81. (*Source: Measuring the State of development in the Western Cape –May 2005*)

#### **4.6.2 The Rhenish Church in Elsies River**

The inclusion of the setting of the Rhenish Church, Elsies River is an attempt to concretely situate the church whose members are located in this community and who is faced with economic development challenges.

In rating South African social institutions the HSRC (2000) found that the public's view of the church received the highest percentage of trust (74% in 2000) as stated in the report of the Transformation Research Project (2005:5). This in view of the researchers of the Transformation Research Project (2005:5) signifies that churches enjoy significant credibility. The well-being of communities depends largely on the harnessing of their citizens' contributions. In many of these communities in the South African context, the majority of the residents are people of faith so that anyone who wants to mobilise these contributions towards the development of society cannot ignore the pervasiveness of these faith communities( TRP 2005:5).

##### **4.6.2.1 Living conditions in Elsies River in view of Economic Development**

The Rhenish Church, Elsies River, based in a predominantly Christian community, as noted by the Transformation Research Project (2005:11,17), was formed in the early 1930's by about 7 families who at first walked to Matroosfontein to attend church, but later started to form a congregation. The people of the Rhenish Church are members of the larger civilian community like the members of the Dutch Reformed Mission church as reported by Marco (1992:7). The context within which this congregation was situated was breeding ground for developing a culture of dependency based on the poor socio-economic conditions but on the one hand but also fitting for the church to be holistically involved in the everyday life of people.

Elsies River operated as a halfway station in the early 1930's for farmers from the surrounding farms to meet the goods trains according to Jagers (1994:3) and Marco (1992:8). Over the years properties in Elsies River, along the Elsies Kraal River were divided amongst



families where shacks were erected and later, as stated by Jagers (1994:3,) wood and iron houses was erected. Jagers (1993:3,4) further records that with the victory of the National Party and with the booming industry in Parow, Bellville and Goodwood more people moved to Elsies River to avoid travelling cost, but also because some areas were declared whites only. Many of the people moving into Elsies River, many from the Platteland, at that stage according to Jagers (1994:4, 26) and Marco (1992:11) was unskilled as a result unemployment became a challenge resulting in poverty and crime. Marco (1992:13) state that in the early 1970's the Divisional Council of the Cape took control of Elsies River after as this area was labelled as one of 24 black spots in the Cape Division with heavy overcrowding according to Setplan (1994:E1). A process of urban renewal was started by the Divisional Council to build 126 flat blocks throughout Elsies River according to Setplan (1994:E1). According to the Unit for Religion and Development Research (URDR) done by Erasmus, Mans and Jacobs (2005:4, 16) Elsies River with a population of about 186,581 has an unemployment percentage (according to StatsSA's definition explained above) of 21.3%. It rose from 13.7% (Census 1996) to 21.3% (Census 2001). According to Settlement Planning Services (1994:A2) 58% of the total Elsies River population was not economically active in 1991 that accounts to a 17% unemployment rate.

The research done by Erasmus, Mans and Jacobs for URDR (2005:17) showed that 80% of the people in Elsies River indicated that they are affiliated with the Christian religion as indicated before. Attempts to organise the churches in Elsies River into a forum has failed according to the researched done by Marco (1992:17). This community according to Marco (1992:19,20) is trapped between the reality of oppression, exploitation through racial capitalism and the deprivation of real economic opportunities that can only best be described as a rape of humanity. Recent research done by the Transformation Research Project (2005:18) shows that there are a total of 289 places where people worship. Congregants utilise different venues for this purpose, e.g. houses, formal buildings, schools or other places and 99% of all places of worship are Christian. Most Christian groups gather in formal church buildings (58%) followed by school buildings (23.4%). In such a community, like Elsies River, the church is commissioned and mandated by Christ to care for the church. As stated in chapter 2 by Handelman (2006:60) when referring to the struggle of the people in the Latin American context, the church seems to have to offer a shield against political repression and be the voice for the poor.

The role of the church in the context explained above seems to be close to what scholars like Boesak (1987:53) and Bloesch (2006:64) would argue as one that seek justice for the victims, that seek liberation for the oppressed, that seek reconciliation and be involved in works of mercy as her Lord has done .

A tradition that was well established within the Rhenish church starting from the ministry of the missionaries was that members of the congregations were diligently and regularly visited in order that they may be ministered to spiritually and socially as observed by Strassberger (1969:59). This tradition was continued by the Rev. Gideon Thomas who started to work in Elsies River since 1933 as an evangelist and later as an ordained minister of the Rhenish Church according to Kotze (1976:9,10). It was the pastoral contact with the members and the concern of their wellbeing, spiritually and socio-economically, that had set the scene for a culture of dependency from the church to be involved in the economic development of the members from the church.

It is understood that members, over the years joint the Rhenish church with the hope that the minister or members of the congregation will assist them in getting employment either in the formal or informal sector as part of their Christian duty towards your fellow believer according to my interview with Moses, a member of the Rhenish Church since his baptism in 1931(Moses 2011).

The church over the years made use of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled members to become Sunday school teachers, committee members, church council members and so many members develop leadership skills as well as skills in public speaking as they have to preach in public. This happened over years and can possibly be part of the reason why expectations were created by members that the church should assist in economic development in order to create situations where members can move from unemployment and the second economy to the first economy.

The reality of poverty, unemployment and the challenges to economic development for members of the congregation of the Rhenish Church, Elsies River need to be explored, not only to establish its relevance as a pastoral phenomenon for the church, but more especially for further study to arrive at a better understanding of the ministerial functions by the church in such settings, with literature available as a guide.

If the church, including the Rhenish Church in Elsie's River has succeeded in playing a decisive role in the economic development of their members, it would be necessary to produce reports on it in order to measure the impact and role that the church is playing.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrated that the church is seen by scholars as a worthy and valued catalyst for economic development within the development paradigm and it therefore sensible to suspect that the church has an economic development role. This view is based on the Biblical calling and injunction to serve the poor as so amicably stated in Chapter 2 by the various scholars. It is furthermore the view of Clarke (2011:2) that the apparent invisibility of religion in the development studies literature should not be mistaken for its non-existence.

From the Bible it is quite clear that the basic needs of human beings are a high priority as this is part of God's concern about human beings (Caleb 2002:54). When basic material needs and basic human rights are denied, voices from Scripture arise that condemn that situation as both the Bible and the Church Fathers according to Caleb (2002:54), made it clear that God has provided enough for everyone's needs, and thus see the denial of basic material needs as a result of injustice and selfishness on the part of some. Literature brought me to the view that if there is a remarkable difference in access to opportunities, like economic opportunities and an unfair control over economic resources among different sectors of the population, this will inhibit the effective participation of a large number of people in their own economic developmental process. With the argument that the church has as its focus a human-centred developmental role, it seems clear that the church will inevitably be involved in supporting policies and actions to liberate those being affected.

Literature seems to suggest that the church becomes an important role player in economic development in the quest of getting everyone in a position to have enough to survive. Justice-making actions in a world of injustice need to be advocated for according to Villa-Vicencio (1992:219). The Church should enter the public arena as it is mandated by the Great Commission of Jesus that demands of it to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and to let the oppressed go free (August 2009:227).

After studying the World Council of Churches' view on the role of the church, Hay (in

Schlossberg, Samuel, Sider, 1994: 157) concludes that church members should continuously search and examine their lifestyle, priorities, structures and involvement, directly and indirectly in economic life in the light of the Christian vision of economic justice. The church need to take a prophetic position in addressing economic injustice, offering alternative visions for economic life, engaging in advocacy, have empowerment ministries, organizing the poor and oppressed to exercise countervailing power to the forces that are oppressing them, otherwise the church will have no right to address secular authorities ( Hay in Schlossberg, Samuel, Sider, 1994: 157).

Strassberger (1969:89) came to the conclusion after studying the work of the Rhenish missionaries in the Cape Province that the mission work was marked by good economic development pointing in the direction of the extension of the Kingdom of God.

There is no simple shortcut to a programmatic economic development system for the church a whole or for any local congregation. On this basis there is a need to learn from successes and failures of specific economic development programs and experiments by churches and partners in order to stimulate economic activity aimed at the well-being of communities. The theological basis for the role of the church in economic development, based on the literature that has been surveyed, is herein understood to seek to enable the people of God to confess who God is and how God is active in our lives and the world, so that in our witness we might participate in, rather than stand apart from, God's transforming activity in the world.

Chapter 5 will offer a comprehensive summary of the main points of what has been discovered and discussed in the literature on the concepts as has been indicated in chapter 1 in conclusion, in order to suggest possible recommendations and indicate what limitations has been discovered.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

#### 5.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to highlight the major points as investigated in literature of the research as discussed in the preceding chapters. On the basis of this study alone as the body of evidence, it is difficult to out rightly state the role of the church in economic development. However given the written data on the subject, there are enough implied indicators given by scholars that alluded to the fact that the church has an economic development role. Given what we know about the subject as indicated in this thesis, we can conclude that literature imply that the church should be involved in economic development.

#### 5.2 Summary of the research

The implication of the findings of this study suggest possible areas for further research by the church in terms of recording written material about the role of the church economic development. Additional research seems needed on the role that the Rhenish Church has played and is playing in economic development to establish if there is consistent evidence.

##### 5.2.1 Chapter 1

The first chapter has discussed the problem statement, the general background and justification that necessitated for this research to be done.

In view of the exploration of the body of knowledge found in the literature, chapter 1 posed these two questions:

1. What do scholars view as and what are the leading positions on the role of the church and does it include economic development?
2. What insights from the literature that was reviewed will enable the researcher to form an opinion and even make some recommendations to the church on the role of the church in economic development?

The expected results and value of the study was among others:

- To be informed of the views of scholars on the role of the church with regard to and economic development;
- To have insight into the value literature with regard to the role of the church and economic development ;
- The church can be supplied with a resource that informs her of literature that deals with the role of the church with regard to economic development ;
- To explore research possibilities based on the literature review where possible shortcomings were identified.

As stated in chapter 1 the experience of the researcher was that the members of his congregation look to the church to assist them in addressing and elimination of their position of poverty, inequality, and unemployment and skill shortage along with their faith formation. The context was a constant challenge to find out and explore what the views of scholars is on the role of the church in economic development in order to help her members meet these basic needs, build self esteem and afford opportunity for development. If economic development according to Mohr, Fourie and associates (2003: 636) is regarded as an improvement in living conditions, than that is what the church is called to do and that was what was explored in the following chapters.

## **5.2.2 Chapter 2**

The second chapter has presented us with the literature of perspectives and interpretations of scholars on their understanding of the role of the church. The attempt was to establish if there was something close to a scholarly consensus in terms of the role of the church.

### **5.2.2.1 Views of Scholars on the Role of the Church**

In chapter 2 we discovered different views by scholars of what they understand the church to be. Scholars like Bloesch (2002:32) sees the church as a poignant sign and witness of the inbreaking of the kingdom into human history. Croft (1987:109) on the other hand stressed the fact that the New Testament, when referring to ‘church’ never described a building but a particular group of people. He further argued that the church is not simply a human organization and a society invented by the early Christians, but that God called the church into being (Croft 1987:110). The purpose of God’s call according to Croft (1987:110), from the very beginning was clearly not just for the blessing of Abram’s descends, but in order for

the ‘called ones’ to be a community of such nature that all the people on earth would be blessed through them.

One of the concluding views on the church was that the church is seen as a new community guided by new rules on its way to a new dispensation that through its obedience and because of its obedience the church is given shape as a caring community according to Heyns (1980:84, 85).

Scholars like Boesak (1987:53) and Bloesch (2006:64) argued that part of the mandate of the church should be to seek justice for victims, liberation for the oppressed, reconciliation in conflicting situations as her Lord had done and to be involved in works of mercy. Küng’s (1973:72), view of how Jesus Christ saw the mission and mandate of the church, rejecting withdrawal from the world, love for sinners, a mission not to gather up the ‘just’ but to gather up the *whole* Israel clearly ask of us to see the church as an inclusive family. A Church according to Küng (1973:99), which overlooks the fact that it is called to the selfless service of humanity, of its enemies and of the world, loses its dignity and the justification of its existence. Tamez (1983:61,62) understand the role of the church as a partner of Yahweh in that she sees the agent of change and liberation being Yahweh acting through the church as Yahweh always comes to the scene in solidarity with the oppressed, for the purpose of assuring the concrete realisation of love and the removal of oppressors.

The church’s identity as stated in chapter 2 for August (2010:44 ) lies in it being ‘*the people called*’ from diverse sorts of bondages to freedom to a sense of identity founded on a common bond with the God of righteousness and compassion. He further stated that the church as the people called is engraved in the Greek word *Ekklesia* that expresses the calling of people out from the broader community to become the community of God, for God’s redemptive purpose in the world ( August 2010:44 p.5). We learnt that Küng ( 1973:99) believe that a church, which overlooks the fact that it is called to the selfless service of humanity, of its enemies and of the world, loses its dignity and the justification of its existence. The one characteristic of this kind of conversion and becoming part of the community in solidarity in view of Bosch (1982:28) is that this community is known as one of *compassion*, and suffering with the other. The view of Bosch is shared by Kysar (1991:68) who believes that the biblical record of the church points to the church being a community with alternative norms and structures as that of the society in which it finds itself. Villa-Vicencio (1992:33) mentions that it would be normal for the church to be involved in nation-

building otherwise the church will lose her moral right to provide prophetic critique of the new society. When viewed this way, the church according to Mangalwadi (in Samuel and Sugden 1987: 199) is meant to stand against the forces of oppression and death because Christ gave it the mandate to feed his lambs and tend to his sheep.

Interestingly August (2010:46) remarks that the church should always be involved in social action as he builds his argument around his understanding that Jesus did not separate human developmental needs from spiritual needs.

The argument by Boesak and August (1977:15, 19; 2010:47), that makes the involvement of church in the liberation struggle inevitable, is based on their conviction that the God of the Bible is the God of liberation rather than oppression, a God of justice rather than injustice, a God of freedom and humanity rather than enslavement and subservience, a God of love, righteousness and brotherhood rather than hatred, self-interest and exploitation.

The church for McKee (1989:109), from a diaconal view should emphasize preventive action, must have a concern for justice and be involved in empowering its members.

The church in view of Dulles (1984:71) is a place where members submit in faith to the liberating action of Christ and where they come to participate actively in Christ's liberating actions in the world. The implication of this view as stated in chapter 2 is that the church member is both a person being liberated and one taking part in the liberation of many others (Dulles 1984:71).

The ultimate image of the church, in view of practical theology scholar, Swart (2004:335), is that of a church in, through and around which a comprehensive mix of initiatives for enduring spiritual, economic and social renewal will develop. Furthermore the liberation theologians in the Latin American context understood the role of the church to be one of setting their parishioners free from oppression and an unproductive tradition by giving them a new insight into the Bible, thus De Vries (2007:190

It seems clear that most scholars view the church as an active role player in the life of the community and it seems to suggest that part of the role of the church would easily be an economic development role.

### **5.2.3 Chapter 3**

The third chapter presented us with an exploration of authoritative views of scholars on what



is understood by development and what is understood by economic development.

### 5.2.3.1 Defining Development

In strictly economic terms, development has traditionally meant the capacity of a national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national income at rates of 5% to 7% or more according to Todaro and Smith (2006:15).

Simon (1997:184) and Carmen (1996:5) on the other hand sees development as the process of enhancing individual and collective quality of life in a manner that satisfies basic needs (as a minimum), is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and is empowering in the sense that the people concerned have a substantial degree of control (because total control may be unrealistic) over the process through access to the means of accumulating social power. The view that Sen (1999:3) holds on development is that he sees development as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy and enhancing the lives we lead. Nelson (1980:162) argues that development necessarily involves critical choices. Slow human development according to Soubbotina (2004:8) can put an end to fast economic growth that seems to be the goal of development.

We discovered that the concept of development since its emergence in the 1950s and early 1960s, has developed to a modern theory round about the end of World War 11, a time according to Tsele ( in Belshaw, Calderisi and Sugden 2001:205) when many war-torn countries were reconstructing themselves. During this period Tsele notes, the concept came to be synonymous with economic reconstruction and growth.

It was established that Simon (1997:184) views development as the process of enhancing individual and collective quality of life in a manner that satisfies basic needs (as a minimum), is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable and is empowering in the sense that the people concerned have a substantial degree of control (because total control may be unrealistic) over the process through access to the means of accumulating social power. The view that Sen (1999:3) brought to the table on development, as mentioned, was that he sees development as a process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy and enhancing the lives we lead. Again it is necessary to note the danger of slow human development according to Soubbotina (2004:8) as it can put an end to fast economic growth, an implied goal of development.

In broad terms scholars like Todaro (1989:89) and Burkey (2000:27) understand the goal of development to mean the sustained elevation of an entire society towards a more humane life and essentially increasing gross levels of savings and investments until a point of self sustaining. We are informed that development has traditionally meant the capacity of a national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its **Gross National Product** at rates of perhaps 5 to 7 % or more according to Todaro (1989:86) and Serote, Mager and Budlender (in Coetzee, Graaff, Hendricks and Wood 2001: 157).

Chapter 3 showed us that there are numerous current approaches and dimensions to development. The views of scholars was looked in terms of what is meant by development as human development and as transformation, development, women and development, development as social development, development as political development and development as liberation.

### **5.2.3.2 Defining Economic development**

Different scholars gave their views, interpretations and definitions on economic development in this chapter that contributed to the construction of the understanding as to what is meant by economic development. Economic development according to Todaro and Smith (2006:14) has been typically seen in terms of the planned alteration of the structure of production and employment so that agriculture's share of both declines and that of the manufacturing and service industries increased. Problems of poverty, discrimination, unemployment and income distribution were of secondary importance to 'getting the growth job done' as it was understood that social benefits will flow from economic growth opportunities.

Attention is drawn in chapter 3 to the view of Cypher and Dietz (2003:8) that states that economic development is about realizing very fundamental human values and about finding the means to extend the fruits of these values, that includes the opportunity for meaningful employment, the possibility to provide for one's self and one's family, sufficient food; the opportunity for pursuing education; a reasonable level of health care; social security; political participation in the life of the community and society; equal treatment under the law and in the economy for all, to the greatest majority of the world's population. We also learnt that economic development, in view of Midgley (1997:193), directly improves people's welfare. With the emphasis on creating employment as a goal of economic development Wilson and

Ramphele (1989:158) warns that the fear of unemployment and its consequences adds greatly to the burden of poverty. An important view that was stressed about economic development was that it touches our shared humanity, thus Cypher and Dietz (2003:8).

Burkey (1993:36) would be in agreement with scholars like Cypher and Dietz as he share the view that economic development is a process by which people through their own individual and joint efforts boost production for direct consumption to sell for cash.

Steytler (1997:18), we discovered, would like to define economic development as the balancing of four competing aims: economic growth, stability of currency, equilibrium of foreign trade and a high level of employment.

In the study of literature we discovered that amongst the challenges faced by economic development is that in addition to the youth, women and the elderly that need to be able to access resources for their development, are those who may be defined as disabled in some way as those who are disabled find it difficult to earn a reasonable income because society assumes that disabled people cannot do as much as others as well as the danger of environmental degradation ( Wilson and Ramphele 1989:183 and Conradie 2006:31).

Literature seemed to suggest that economic development does not happen on its own and therefore policy-makers involved in economic development need to know when and how to get to new strategies when needed according to Cypher and Dietz (2003: xx). The State, in view of Steytler (1997:18) plays a major role in supporting and promoting the balance between these four aims and can use its own budget to influence the economy, can provide a framework of conditions and legal instruments to create or maintain stability in economic development.

In light of the literature that has been reviewed on development and economic development, it would seem relevant to ask if scholars would see the church as one of the role players in economic development.

#### **5.2.4 Chapter 4**

This chapter attempted to investigate if literature affords us with a basis for the role of the church in economic development. Literature was surveyed to assist us in establishing what has been recorded in terms of the role of the church in economic development in the early church, mission the contemporary debate on the role of the church in economic development.

This chapter also attempted to place the Rhenish Church, Elsie's River in its physical environment within the Western Cape in order to gain some understanding of the conditions where people find themselves that profess that they are in need of economic development.

This need to explore literature by the researcher as explained in chapter 1 is based on the presupposition by the researcher that literature on the role of the church in economic development, is lacking to a point where recommendations can be made to the church in this regard.

What the research did was to bring to the attention what is broadly viewed by scholars the role of the church in development and economic development.

#### **5.2.4.1 The Role of the Church in Economic Development**

The question at hand for the church to answer was if there is a history of church involvement in economic development? If so, we wanted to establish if the church really have a culture of being involved in development and then the economic development of the members and the community she find herself in?

In reviewing and surveying the literature the following concluding arguments were discovered as scholars formed some opinion on the role of the church:

Fernandes (1970:239) argued that it is not the mission of the Church to propose concrete solutions to the problems of development but if it is to *co-operate in finding the solution to the out-standing problems of our time*, then, unquestionably, there is need of strategic thought and action by the church based on the fact that, "theory without practice is sterile, just as practice without theory is blind." So as the church seek to strengthen her legitimacy in the domain of economic development, Tsele (in Belshaw, Calderisi and Sudgen 2001:209) argued that the church has an obligation to demonstrate that it brings something substantive to the economic development table and that her commitment are driven by different motives. . McKee (1989:64) draws our attention as mentioned in chapter 2, to the caring role of the church in mentioning that John Calvin taught that the diaconate role of the church is seen as a permanent ecclesiastical ministry of care for the poor and sick and the physical suffering of human beings.

The importance of Christ's command to His followers to go into the entire world to proclaim the gospel and make disciples underlined for Gibbs and Coffey (2001:59) the objective of sending the church out into the world bearing the good news. We were further reminded by

Caleb (2002:48) that if there is one commandment that runs through the entire New Testament it is the commandment to "love one's neighbor as oneself. Translated into economic terms, the commandment meant that each obeyer of the commandment must seek to provide for those in need (the Parable of the Good Samaritan establishes that the person in need whom I can help, is the neighbor), with the same economic opportunities and goods as he or she possesses according to Caleb (2002:48). This commandment according to Caleb (2002:48) calls for the provision of the basic needs of all people, as well as a great measure of equality, for giving to another in need what one would wish for oneself must eventually lead to a great measure of material equality. It was the following of this commandment that led to the community being formed in Acts, where those who had more wealth sold their goods in order to provide for the needy according to Caleb (2002:48).

Biblically based economic development states Moffitt (1987:235), is any movement of individuals in the mental, physical, spiritual, social and economic arenas towards God's present and future purpose for us. Based on this view, Villa-Vicencio (1992:219) argued that the church becomes an important role player in economic development in attempting to achieve the goal of having everyone in a position to have enough to survive, justice-making actions in a world of injustice. The Church therefore should enter the public arena because it is mandated to do so by the Great Commission of Jesus, that is to proclaim the kingdom of God, bring good news to the poor and to proclaim release to the captives and to let the oppressed go free (August 2009:227).

Since 1994 South Africans have been living in a *secular, pluralist, democratic society* with a community like Elsies River in desperate need of economic opportunities. Such a society has various public institutions, organizations and initiatives that fill the public space. Free from government intervention, the church can actually organize the members into autonomous organizations that can engage in economic development.

The church is an example of an organization, competing with government and business for room in the public space. It is however evident based on the literature that the church is an important role player in influencing and transforming human development, but fact of the matter is that little has been recorded about the role of the church in economic development.

### **5.3 Limitations**

As this research report is exploratory in nature in reviewing existing knowledge and views of

scholars on the role of the church in economic development, it would be proper to indicate some of the limitations that the researcher has encountered before making some recommendations. The following six limitations would be among the many that has been identified:

1. There can be no pretention of offering some general blueprint, some plan or campaign that could be adequate for the vast challenges that economic development offers based on the literature that was under investigation. This in itself is seen by the researcher as a limitation. It was not possible to explore literature that deals with correctives against expansionist notions of economic growth.
2. As mentioned by Nürnberger (1999:320) that ecological deterioration may create new needs such as clean water that may imply a need for a reorientation of the entire economic system and the approach to economic development. This thesis find a limitation in the fact that the views connected to ecology and economic development and the role that the church can play, could not be explored as it would fall out of the scope of this research.
3. It would have been interested to explore literature or an indebt study of specific scholars, which deals with the effects of unemployment on the youth, women and the disabled with the possibility of looking at collaborative action by public private partners.
4. The church, along with society face serious psychological and indeed spiritual questions about the long-term effects of people being made feel worthless, unwanted and hopeless where economic development seem to be unsuccessful in terms of the objectives. It would have been very meaningful to have critically explored the role that the church can play in dealing with these realities.
5. The fact that so very little if any has been written by scholars from the Rhenish Church in South Africa was experienced as a serious limitation by the researcher and would therefore warrant that scholars from this denomination should be encouraged to start with critical engagement on what is understood by the role of the church with regard to economic development in order to inform the church of the possibilities and the possible acts.
6. Based on the fact that the researcher intended to explore literature on the theme and therefore followed as a literature review method to gather data it was experienced as a

limitation in terms of not being able to engage in length with scholars on their views and positions in order to keep the balance and length of a master's thesis.

#### **5.4 Concluding Implications and Recommendations**

With reference to the main three objectives of this research as stated in chapter 1 (p.10, 11), the previous chapters have succeeded in addressing the first two objectives. This section attempts to address the third objective in terms of making recommendations and suggesting areas for possible further research.

This study can serve as some introduction to the potentially vast study of the role of the church and economic development, as it clearly intersect with each other.

If little has been written explicitly about the role of the church in economic development but in light of the literature surveyed in this research, the following can serve as recommendations, given the research question:

1. Firstly, the paradigm of church leaders must be challenged. Church leaders must focus more on the kingdom of God and the community and less on keeping believers inside the church. Commitment with actions should be encouraged by clergy and laity to identify with the poor and unemployed in their struggle for justice, human dignity and honest development and so bear witness to the mission of God in the world.
2. With reference to what has been identified as the role of the church in this research, the church can develop Bible studies, prayers and educational programmes where Christians can come to understand some of the complexities of economic development.
3. National Church Bodies like the WCC, The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, The World Communion of Reformed Churches, The Lutheran World Federation and the Pentecostal World Conference can publish critical reviews of the policies of government and other economic powers on economic development with possible recommendations, improvements or rejections in favour of alternatives in order to contribute to the economic development debate.
4. Denominations have a world confessional family that can serve as a network of contacts around the world where ecumenical economic development co-operative societies can be formed to support initiatives aimed at dealing with economic development. At the same time churches should be encouraged to investigate what

organisation already exist and what can be learnt by those who is engaged in economic development initiatives.

5. Churches should form partnerships with the community, other churches and other role-players in order to collectively and effectively address the difficulties members of the community struggle with, with special reference to the economic development of the members based on the fact that this thesis argues that diaconia is seen as intervention.
6. Literature should be explored where there is a critical engagement with scholars on questions like: What are the responsibilities of churches and Christians in public life and what example do we have of action that was taken by the church to address economic development from missional, ecclesiological and diaconal perspective.

### **5.5 Areas for Further Research**

This research identifies the following areas as potential fields of research:

1. The impact or the lack of and the value of understanding the role of the church in economic development by the church.
2. Developing a policy document that can serve as a guide to indicate to the church what it means to be church in this context of poverty with regard to economic development.
3. Do undertake an empirical investigation on the role of the church with regard to economic development.
4. Developing a theology orientation praxis program by the church for church leaders and members that can assist them in dealing with contextual challenges with special reference to the role of the church in economic development and by so doing this can enhance the religious literature.
5. The Church has the potential to influence the community and the potential to promote change. The point is how can this be managed and how can the church partner with the role players in achieving this goal?
6. Do investigate how economic development issues can be introduced in the worship life of the church.



## 5.6 Conclusion

It is evident, that daunting challenges still face South Africa after the *miracle* of its peaceful transition. Overwhelming poverty, unemployment, the need for economic development and poverty-related problems such as the HIV/Aids pandemic, face Africa and is an economic developmental threat. South Africa is comprised of both a rich and a poor world. Previously, the apartheid laws marked boundaries between these two worlds. Social and economic transformation, implying the way society and culture change in response to such factors as economic growth, war or political upheavals, is particularly relevant as part of the role of the church, to the continuing transformation of communities like Elsies River in post-apartheid South Africa .

The conclusion that may be drawn from literature concerning the role of the church in economic development in view of the scholars that was consulted implies and confirms the following:

- The church has always been involved in economic development;
- The church is more than just a place where people come to listen to the gospel;
- The church, it seems, provides a form of security that reinforces human dignity and empowerment and has the capacity to be the most significant partner in poverty-reducing programs and human development initiatives;
- While the church cannot solve all the social and economic problems, the belief is that it can certainly make a substantial contribution in economic development as religious groups are well placed according to Clarke (2011:10) to play a powerful role in development at the local level;
- A need for an active advocacy approach to economic development by the church is confirmed.

There is no doubt that economic development issues affect the daily lives of us all.

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